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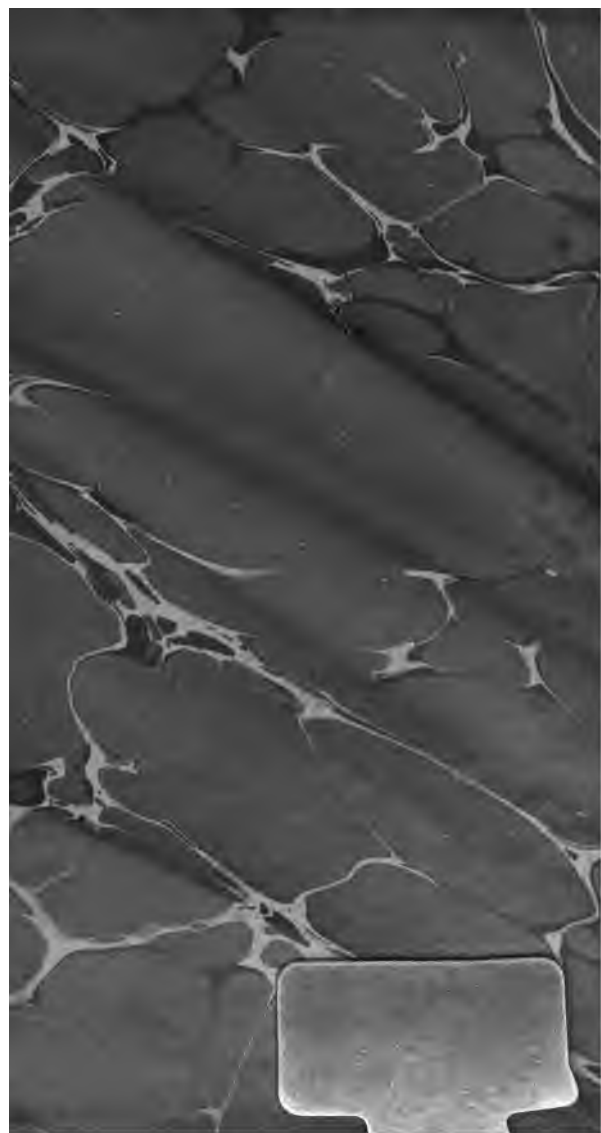
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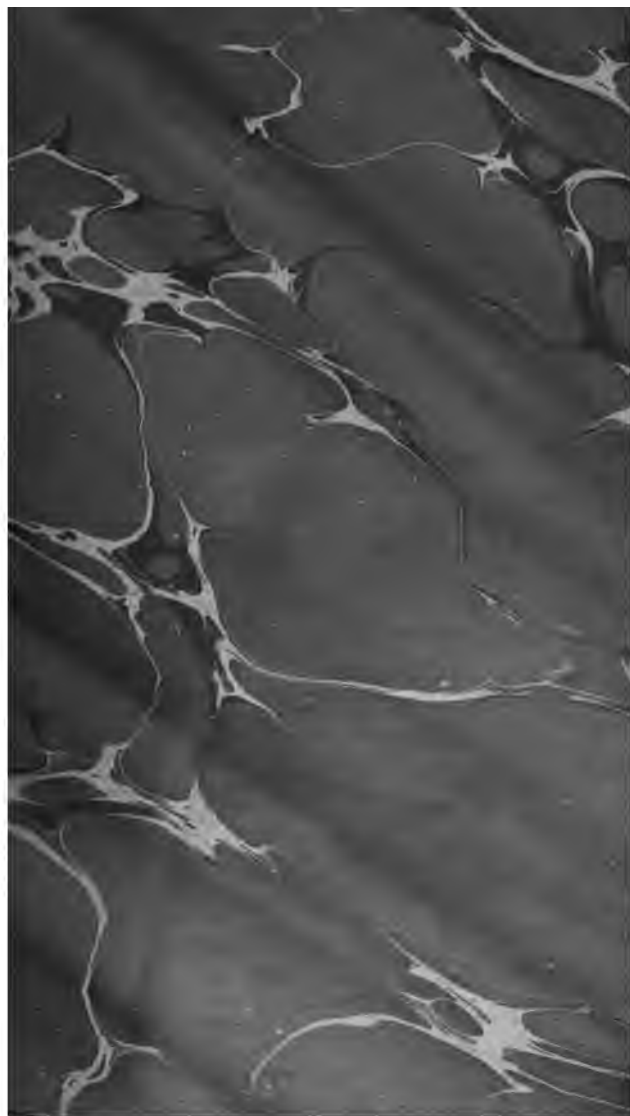
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INFLUENCE:

Moral Tale

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY A LADY.

He who acts from principle shall be exposed to no wounds but
what religion can cure.—*Blair.*

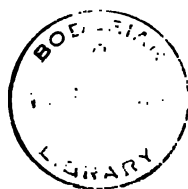
IN TWO VOLUMES.

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INFLUENCE.

CHAP. I.

“**T**HIS day,” said Herbert as he joined the cheerful party assembled round the breakfast table at Llanvair, “hails with its brightest smiles, the first return of an autumnal sun. September thus opens to us a scene fraught with new glories—new anticipations. Yet it is man, for whom these varied pleasures are ordained, who alone sighs over the remembrance of past pleasures, and would murmur at their close, as if joy were confined to one fleeting season, or as if winter could close that source of happiness which is opened to the christian in every season, age and country.”

“Why, Herbert,” said Louis, looking at the serious countenance of his friend, “I thought

you went to bed last night a very harlequin, but the 'spirit of your dream' seems changed, and morning finds you turned moralist."

"And I think," replied Herbert, "that your heart will catch the spirit of my philosophy, for I guess this letter," added he, taking one directed to Louis from a packet which he held in his hand, "will somewhat sadden that bright smile of yours." "An official one, in all due submission to its red imperials," exclaimed Louis, "and a summons in good earnest! Well," added he, sighing, "I expected it, but it comes as a sad antidote to a merry breakfast."

"Surely," said Lady Warton, addressing Herbert and Louis alternately, "you are not yet called away from us?"

"I am sorry to say," replied Herbert, "that this day fortnight is fixed for our return to Lymington. That letter to Louis came enclosed in a packet from my mother, who tells me that my commission has been granted, and my passage to India already secured in one of the ships going out in the October fleet. Louis must also join his regiment in about a fortnight, and my mother wishes us to return with him, that I may remain with her the few last weeks of my being in England: our summons therefore of course admits of no further reprieve."

"This is indeed a sad spirit come over the face of things," said Lady Warton; "I hope however that we shall all meet again"—

"I fear," replied Herbert gravely, "that many a summer's sun must bronze my face before I can again behold the country that will always be the dearest to my heart."

Lady Warton looked at Herbert with an expression of almost maternal affection, and caught the sadness of his forebodings, as she too truly believed the prophecy; "and yet," thought she, "why should I mourn; his is the path of duty, and he will probably return in a few years, in the full manhood of his life, and crowned with all the honors of a christian career. I indeed cannot expect to be here to hail his return; but still we shall meet again in that happier world, where parting will not be known."

A general silence of some minutes ensued, for the question, "When shall we all meet again?" had fallen heavily on the heart of each.

Ellen had not spoken, but the tears rolled down her cheek as she heard the sad intelligence of their summons; but, at last, as she thought of the anticipation of so long a separation from her brother, she leaned her head upon Miss Aubrey's shoulder, and gave free

vent to her feelings : " Oh ! what will become of me when my dear, dear Herbert is gone ?" exclaimed she ; " I shall never see him again."

Herbert went to her, and affectionately endeavoured to offer consolation, by reminding her that they would still be many weeks together. " Let us not then, Ellen," said he, " make duty a painful task ; in a few years we may meet again, and in the meanwhile think of the pleasure we may bestow and share in doing our best while separated, to ensure, if it be the will of God, a happy meeting even here, and an eternal one hereafter."

Thus with the united efforts of Miss Aubrey, Ellen became more reconciled. She smiled through her tears, as Miss Aubrey said, " Let me be a sister to you, and then shall I not do almost as well as a brother, till Herbert comes back again ?"

" Oh," replied Ellen mournfully, " but you are not going with me. I shall have nobody left to love or care for me, obliged to live in that vile place Lymington, where I shall care for nobody but mamma."

" But you will have many duties, dear Ellen, to care for," replied Miss Aubrey, " and that must sweeten every situation—enliven every place ; and then as you are not going to India,

you can come here again next summer, when we shall increase your little district, and make you the busiest of the busy! Think, Ellen, of the pleasure we shall enjoy in resuming all our village cares, and I shall write to you very often: but come," added she, wiping the remaining tears from Ellen's cheeks, "as Herbert says, we must not be the only beings of nature's creation to sorrow at the close of past blessings, when so bright a sun meets us as an earnest of continued mercies. We have a long fortnight yet to be together, so we must make the most of our time, for we shall find many things to do, and much to say. To begin then, let us now go and visit your young invalid, and then to the school, where I dare say we shall find Fanny busily employed in distributing her weekly rewards." So saying, both left the room, and Ellen soon appeared with a brighter countenance, ready for her errand.

- It would be needless to describe the feelings of regret excited at the Priory by the anticipation of Herbert's departure; they were all that affection could express, but were still subservient to those of resignation to the will of God, who for the same wise end ordains bereavement, or continued possession of bless-

ings. The ensuing ten days were therefore passed in cheerful enjoyment of each other's society, but the Sunday now approached which would probably be the last shared together for many years, and before the return of such another—ah! who could say over whom might pass the messenger of death, whose mandate must be obeyed alike by young and old, and whose touch no human agency can avert!

The sacrament was administered on that day at the little chapel at St. Llenard's, and all but Ellen remained to partake the privileges of the sacred ordinance, once more to unite together in that holy baptism, which renews the tie between the Creator and the creature when received in steadfast faith on the promises of the Redeemer.

On their return home, each retired to their separate rooms, and Louis to the library, where he was surprised to find Ellen sitting mournfully, with her arm resting on a large Bible, opened at the description of our Lord's supper, over which she appeared so intently engaged, that Louis remained some moments in the room before she knew that he was near her. She had evidently retired there on her return from church, as her pelisse was merely loosened, and her bonnet thrown down care-

lessly by her side. Louis, fearful of alarming her, gently came forward, and assuming a cheerful voice, he said, "Why, my dear Ellen, I have never seen you look so serious before."

"Because," replied Ellen, startled, "I have never before thought so seriously on a serious subject."

"And what may that subject be?" said Louis.

"The Lord's Supper," replied Ellen, with a tone of deep feeling, "from which I alone of twelve, like a second Iscariot, have turned away, while others have fed from the sacred cup of everlasting life."

"But indeed, Ellen," said Louis, taking her hand, "here you condemn yourself unjustly. In religion as in life, we must be infants before we attain manhood; you are yet too young—not too unworthy to unite in our privileges; they are resigned from necessity, not refused from choice."

"Oh," replied Ellen, "with a brighter countenance, I would now do any thing, every thing to forward the cause of religion; but where can I find the opportunity at Lymington to advance what is there only ridiculed and condemned? my very endeavours would be called fanaticism, and would only injure the

cause I would advance, by exposing it tenfold to sarcasm and reproach."

"I know no place," replied Louis, "where you may find so many opportunities of doing good as at Durnford, where (in your own circle I mean) religion is so much neglected: but you must guard most carefully against the fanaticism to which indeed your zeal may lead you. Remember, that enthusiasm, particularly where religion is concerned, is a most dangerous weapon, since it requires the strongest mind, and great judgment, to use without abusing it. To the young christian then it is rather a fatal, than a useful implement; but let your example in all those Christian virtues, which you would endeavour to excite in others, speak even more powerfully than your precepts. Under pain or injury be patient, resigned, and if possible be cheerful; humble in yourself, be gentle towards others; steadfast in the pursuance of your own duties, let not the influence of the world check your continuance in well-doing; but above all, remember how weak are our best efforts without the strength of an Almighty hand; most earnestly, therefore, pray to be preserved from self-confidence, lest you should again fall under the fatal power of Caroline Herbert."

"Oh no," replied Ellen, "I am determined to yield no more to her influence, and I need not be so much with her again, now that Miss Graham is gone : I wish indeed that I could persuade her to live as Fanny Seymour does ; but if I fail in that, she shall not tempt me again to follow her own example."

"Heaven grant it," was all that Louis could reply, as Miss Aubrey and Fanny, who had been looking for Ellen, now entered the library ; they proposed a walk to visit a sick cottager, and Louis for once, leaving Ellen with her brother and Fanny, joined Miss Aubrey, and related to her all that had passed. They agreed that as Ellen was so desirous of receiving the sacrament, there could be no objection with respect to her age. Miss Aubrey therefore promised to speak to her upon the subject, and explain, as clearly as her judgment would permit, the nature of so sacred and binding an obligation. Louis then told her most unservedly the interest he felt in Ellen's welfare ; his intention of declaring his affection for her to Mrs. Irwyn immediately on his return, and of the situation in which he stood respecting his father ; but he added, that as in all probability his regiment would very shortly be ordered to Germany, he would in that case go to Switzerland, and endeavour to over-

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come his father's prejudice against a foreign connexion. Miss Aubrey was not surprised at this communication, as his partiality to Ellen had not escaped her penetration, and deeply interested for them both, she promised to exert her utmost endeavours to preserve Ellen's mind in its present bias. She acknowledged that there was much excellence of disposition to build upon and admire, and that it was almost impossible to resist her affectionate solicitude to please those who evinced the slightest degree of anxiety or interest in her behalf; "but still," added Miss Aubrey, "I cannot but tremble when I see how completely she is the creature of feeling, how much under the control of influence; placed in a situation of peculiar temptation, and standing alone as it were, to brave the current of bad examples." As she said this, she could not but inwardly wish that Ellen's mind were better suited to the fine manly disposition of Louis. Herbert and the girls here joined them as turning an angle on their return homeward.

During the remainder of the day Ellen was unusually silent and grave, but Miss Aubrey endeavoured to divert her mind by dwelling much on the attendant cheerfulness and com-

forts of religion ; so that when they parted at the close of the evening service, she felt an inward conviction that there was no peace like that of a well-spent day.

Only two days now remained to enjoy the pleasures of Llanvair. For the last time Ellen went to visit poor Susan Elliot, from whom she received a lesson of pious resignation ; she then distributed presents to the children of her little district, and returned to Fanny Seymour to give up all the insignia of her office. Lady Warton and her party were to dine at the Priory ; Ellen therefore remained with Fanny during the morning, when they expressed the feelings of mutual affection now rooted between them, and promised that an unreserved intercourse should be henceforth steadily preserved. Mr. Seymour, who saw that a disposition such as Ellen's must be exposed to many trials, many temptations, felt for her almost a parent's anxiety ; he wished much that she might have remained with Fanny till her character were more decidedly formed, but he saw the impossibility of retaining her from her mother, and therefore would not venture to propose it ; but promised, if circumstances would permit her leaving home, he would endeavour to obtain Mrs.

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Irwyn's consent to her passing the summer months at St. Llenard's, and as she would always find a sufficient escort in Miss Aubrey, he would defray the expenses of her journey, should that consideration be an obstacle to his wishes. He then led her to his study, and as a remembrance of his best wishes, gave her a beautiful edition of Scott's Bible, entreating, that as she had begun a course of sacred reading, she would steadily pursue it. "Read it, Ellen," continued Mr. Seymour, "with all the docility of a little child, as the sacred inspirations of your heavenly Father, given to teach us the only way to gain everlasting life. You may be told it is merely a tale of imagination; the vision of fanaticism to alarm our minds with a dread of future punishment: but such sophistry cannot elude its sacred credentials, cannot blot out the word of prophecy, which of itself bears 'resistless evidence.' It is the beacon which Christ himself came down from Heaven to erect as an ever-living monument of his mercy towards us, to warn us of impending death, to save us from the wrath to come. It is the banner of his victory over sin, the cross at which we may cast the burden of all our cares. It is the

book from whence babes may gather wisdom, and old men innocence; for it teaches, it renews, it strengthens, it comforts, and it encourages. Such are its consolations, and it is the wilful transgressor only who need tremble at its awful denunciations. Shall we then, Ellen, reject so great salvation? shall we possess this never-failing guide, and let it be to us a "sealed book?" Take it, and earnestly pray that it may turn your self-willed heart to the wisdom of the just, and that finally, by the influence of its holy precepts, you may be enabled to follow that which is good, and be a partaker of its blessed promises."

Ellen received the gift, and felt grateful for the kind solicitude with which it was given. She assured Mr. Seymour that his advice should not be forgotten, and that she would endeavour to profit by the advantages which she had lately enjoyed. He then ventured to advise her respecting Caroline Herbert, and to caution her against that specious profession, which, bearing the name of *friendship*, might again unwarily lead her under the influence of its power: assuring her at the same time that if ever she should need a parent's care, or the shelter of a home, she should never seek them

in vain at St. Llenard's Priory, where at all times and in all circumstances, she should be received and welcomed as a second child.

The arrival of Lady Warton and her young guests here put an end to the subject, as Mr. Seymour was summoned to join them in the drawing-room, where they were all engaged in looking at two small paintings which Fanny had just completed for Herbert. One was a view of Llanvair, the other of St. Llenard's Priory, highly finished in oils, and beautifully executed. Ellen asked from whence that of St. Llenard's had been taken, Mr. Seymour therefore offered to escort her to the very mount, as it was not beyond his own little domain; Herbert and Fanny, being anxious to compare the representation with the reality, accompanied them, leaving Lady Warton and Miss Aubrey in charge of Louis. Mr. Seymour did not remain long with the young people; and on rejoining the others, he found Miss Aubrey and Louis warmly contesting some topic which seemed equally to interest both the speakers. "Pray," said he, as he entered the room, "what may be the subject of so animated a discussion?"

"The conversion of the Jews," replied Louis. "And what is the question?" asked Mr. Seymour. "Whether our attempt to con-

vert the Jews," replied Louis, "is not more likely to impoverish our own country than to hasten the desired restoration?"

"Then," said Mr. Seymour, "your opinion is of course in favor of the question."

"Certainly," replied Louis hesitatingly, "I am arguing against the probability that England, which is literally only a speck in the creation, should be made the favoured instrument of promoting the fulfilment of so great a prophecy, which the Almighty in His own good time shall effect." "Well then, young Captain," exclaimed Mr. Seymour, "I will venture any thing I possess that you do not make your cause good, and ten times as much, if in less than two hours Miss Aubrey does not make you a proselyte to her own opinion. You have a powerful head to deal with, let me tell you."

"Thank you, my dear Sir," said Miss Aubrey, smiling, "for thus abetting me, for perhaps there is no stratagem in gaining a conquest like that of alarming the adversary: and, although there are but few points in which I would not willingly yield my judgment to that of Captain de Rancy; in this instance, I confess that I should indeed be sorry were he to prove the more powerful."

Here Mr. Seymour brought in array before

the combatants, Newton and all the best commentators on the prophecy in question, but the Bible was the only authority Miss Aubrey desired. Louis endeavoured to prove that many centuries must elapse before Israel shall be a restored nation, as the fulfilment of that prophecy was always promised in the "latter days—now," added he, "although we know not in what period the latter days shall be, yet as there are still many remaining prophecies to be accomplished before the gathering together of the Jews, we may surely conclude that those days are not yet at hand; why then should we presume to suppose that the power is our own to hasten the purposes of the Almighty?"

"We may certainly look forward to some few ages before the complete re-establishment of Jerusalem," replied Miss Aubrey, "yet how can we assert that it will not be a work of *many* centuries; consequently, that it has not even now commenced? All the *earlier* prophecies, which were given ages before their completion, have been not only fulfilled, but clearly proved to us in undoubted evidence. Babylon, 'the glory of kingdoms,' for the wilful transgressions of her people, has been overthrown and desolated; there 'the shep-

herds can no longer make their fold,' for wild beasts have gathered round it, and their houses are 'full of doleful creatures'—a prophecy, which has been so wonderfully fulfilled, that even to this day the ruins of Babylon are so overrun with serpents and venomous reptiles, that no one dare approach it excepting for two months in the winter. From Israel, too, the 'glory of the Lord' is departed. One stone of her temple is not left upon another. The happy land—Israel's very Salem has been degraded, called 'Desolate,' 'Forsaken.' But at the very time of its threatened destruction a gracious promise was given, that a 'star should arise out of Judah, to be the glory of the people Israel,'—'a root of Jesse,' 'in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed;' for although Israel should be 'no more a nation,' and her people be scattered over the earth, yet a '*remnant*' should be saved, by which the kingdom is eventually to be restored. Now a part of this prophecy has been already fulfilled. The star has risen, the root of Jesse has flourished, and a remnant of Israel has been preserved, which, although *now* scattered, the Lord shall gather again, and 'keep as a shepherd doth his flock.'

"Then," said Louis, "why not leave it for

the Shepherd whose care is sufficient for it, and who will surely redeem it according to his word? Why should England claim the privilege of its restoration, since '*all nations*,' not England alone, shall be blessed in that glorious day? It is not in Britain only that the remnant is scattered."

"Various are the ways of the Almighty," replied Miss Aubrey, "to effect his purposes, and infinite wisdom directs them all. Before the *coming* of our Lord, God wrought them by prophecies, by visions, and by his own immediate interposition. During the *time* of our Lord, it was by signs and wonders, by miracles, and by the immediate *presence* of our Saviour. His resurrection terminated the mission of his coming, God's purposes were fulfilled, atonement was completed, and salvation proclaimed; therefore, according to the will of God, miracles have ceased, prophecy is no more. But is not the work of universal redemption *still* going on? Must not the promises of the Lord, '*whose counsels shall stand for ever*,' all be fulfilled? Shall not every *remaining* prophecy be accomplished, although the *days of prophecy* are over? Since then miracles have ceased, and '*Israel's Shepherd*' shall descend no more, till in the '*last*

day, at 'His second coming to judge the world,' how can the remaining purposes of God be effected but through the *agency of man*? And since God has vouchsafed to choose *us* as instruments of his power, to proclaim the 'glad tidings of salvation,' are we to reject the blessed privilege because too feeble in ourselves? Shall our missionaries refuse their office, because they are but weak instruments to effect the purpose of their sacred errand? Where is our faith, if this favored country, on which are bestowed the *means* of distributing the word of God, withholds the treasure from heathen lands, because afraid that its own might lose a small portion of its perishable wealth? Glorious is the cause in which England is engaged! Let not her people then shrink from the difficulties of so exalted, so heavenly a commission."

"If indeed," said Louis, "our gold could enrich the heathen countries with the treasures of heaven, poverty to us would then be a ten-fold blessing: but in giving, are we *sure* that Jews and infidels *receive*? Is it not known that our gifts have been perverted? and perhaps in offering temptation we only encourage imposition."

"And is it," exclaimed Miss Aubrey,

“because a *few sin*, that many shall not be saved? On the impostors must fall the punishment; not in *our* hands must rest the judgment. As Ellen says, every good, while we are on earth, must have its attendant evil, but if good preponderate—as in this instance—good must be the issue. And since the remnant of God’s people are to be gathered again together, and many of those wandering sheep now stray in our land, is it presumption to suppose that we may be agents whom the Shepherd shall employ to redeem them?—of whom perhaps He has said, ‘I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem!’—and to whom He hath spoken—‘you that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him *no rest*, until He *establish* and make *Jerusalem a praise* in the earth.’—And does he not say of the Jews, ‘they shall be called a city *sought out*, *not* forsaken?’

“Who, then, must seek it, if not those who are empowered with the means? Oh! Louis, go in our streets, and see the wretched objects, young and old, who bear the very stamp of their country’s malediction. Then go to Spital Fields, and see them gathered from idleness and depravity, now earning in laborious toil the bread of industry and virtue:

many of them redeemed, and already living as faithful servants of Him, whom once they persecuted! Shall this belong to England, and yet her people not glory in the blessing? Remember, that both a command and a promise rest with us, 'Oh! pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper who love her.'

"Enough," said Louis, smiling at the enthusiastic energy with which Miss Aubrey had supported her favorite cause, "and I confess myself a convert to your opinion. I have never before seriously considered the question; but in truth, your arguments in its favor are powerful, and henceforth I will consider myself bound to support it."

"Now, young man," said Mr. Seymour, "from this time never dare again assert that women are our inferiors in mental powers—but here are the young ones, and I fancy dinner has summoned them by the haste in which they are returning."

Scarcely had Mr. Seymour spoken before it was announced, and as soon as the young people were ready they all adjourned to the dining-room; Louis claimed Ellen and Miss Aubrey as his charge. Much conversation ensued between them on the present system

of educating the poor, in which many arguments for and against the national schools were brought forward. Louis became more and more delighted with Miss Aubrey, and he afterwards confessed to Mr. Seymour, that he had never met with one possessing such combined powers of heart and mind.

On separating in the evening, Lady Warton reminded Mr. Seymour that the present party were all to meet the ensuing day at the Hall; and tears glistened in her eyes, as she added, "Pray let it be a long one, as you know it is the last which we shall enjoy with our children."

The next morning none appeared in their accustomed spirits—the breakfast passed almost in silence, interrupted only by a few common-place remarks. Herbert left them as soon as it was over, saying that he was going to the Priory, and should not return till dinner. Miss Aubrey was somewhat surprised that Ellen did not offer to accompany her brother to pass the last day with Fanny, but upon asking if she did not intend it, Ellen blushed, and only replied, "No, I will remain with you;" upon which Lady Warton immediately said, evidently with some purpose, "Herbert is a deserter, but I hope none of

the others will leave me this morning, as the last day brings with it a thousand engagements, for which I am now selfish enough to claim them." Nothing more was said, nor was any mention made during the remainder of the morning, either of Herbert or St. Llenard's Priory.

The day advanced, and dinner nearly at hand before Mr. Seymour and Fanny made their appearance, Lady Warton complained of their truancy, when Mr. Seymour only answered, "To tell you the truth, Herbert so beguiled my morning, that I almost lost sight of time till time reminded me that he could wait for no man." This was said in a tone of playfulness, but still much penetration was not required to see something had occurred of no small interest to the parties concerned. Fanny was less lively than usual, and though a stranger might not have remarked her being otherwise than cheerful, yet she was extremely pale, and those that knew her mind saw that the cheerfulness she assumed was evidently a struggle against feeling. Mr. Seymour strove to keep up the spirits of all parties, he spoke frequently to Fanny, and in a tone of more affectionate solicitude than even he was wont to betray. Herbert was silent and depressed,

as if afraid a word might expose feelings which he endeavoured in vain to conceal ; while poor Ellen, with the thoughts of to-morrow hanging over her, would not for a moment leave Miss Aubrey's side, but whenever she was addressed a tear was her only reply. Lady Warton, too, as she thought of the future welfare of her favorite boy, with whom she was about to part, perhaps for ever, was busy in the past : associations of former days were recalled as she looked on the children now before her, and thought on those of whom they alone remained as living memorials—on those whose infancy she had watched ; and yet *she* still lived to speak of them as blessings that *had* been dear to her. Thus each caught the sadness of the other ; and although music, and the children, and all their baby pleasures, were brought forward as antidotes, nothing could quite dispel the mournful anticipations which at present clouded their happiness.

Mr. Seymour proposed going home earlier than usual, as he said the travellers ought to be allowed as long a night as possible. Ellen wept bitterly as Fanny Seymour took an affectionate leave of her, promising a continued interest in her welfare. Herbert begged to be their escort, but assured Lady Warton that

he would return in time to join the evening prayer.

He walked silently by the side of Mr. Seymour, till on entering the Priory, he followed him to the study, leaving Fanny alone in the drawing-room, and said, as he closed the door, " May I, my dear Sir, only ask one little indulgence, the favor of corresponding with Fanny, although you will not permit our engagement ?"

Mr. Seymour, pained by the expression of Herbert's solicitation, answered, taking his hand with the utmost affection, " I see, my dear Herbert, that you will not enter into the motives which urge me to refuse a request that I confess is not only reasonable, but perfectly consistent with all I wish you to feel: do not then let us part, perhaps for many years, under any misunderstanding, nor leave me as a son under some severe sentence of unjust authority. I know not the man, Herbert, to whom I would so fearlessly confide the happiness of my beloved child, so confidently entrust the charge of this, my best treasure. I have for many years anticipated your union with her as the fulfilment of my most anxious desire; I have witnessed your mutual attachment and growing worth with

the delight of a fond parent, interested alike in each of you ; I am not changed, my wishes remain the same ; but if with a clearer foresight, which age and the experience of life have bestowed on me, I can better estimate the essentials of happiness, must I from the false indulgence of sparing you a momentary pang, suffer you to enter a path which I know is beset with so many cares and difficulties ? But let me ask you, Herbert, could you, on your present limited income, support a wife, and continue to her all the comforts of a home, humble as it is, to which she has been accustomed from her birth, and in India, too, where tenfold the sum would not answer the demands of a family ? Do you love Fanny, and wish to expose her to so severe a trial ?

“ Oh no,” said Herbert, “ marriage is at present, I know, out of the question ; but where can rest the objection to our engagement ! do you suppose that ten years will change my heart or principles ?

“ I truly believe,” replied Mr. Seymour, “ that twenty years will make no change but to improve them : but as yet, Herbert, you have seen nothing of the world ; your taste has been modelled on the domestic quietness, which in our humble sphere you have wit-

nessed and enjoyed, and you therefore believe that Fanny, as its ornament, would in every circle still shine superior, and be your pride and your delight; but when you go into a world where you will see the brightest assemblage of talent and beauty, and find too, that such are the baubles on which men raise their vision of marriage happiness, would you never look with envy upon such? and when in a few years your views of happiness are changed, and the more peaceful pleasures of retirement are forgotten in the blaze of wealth and splendour, which will then perhaps surround you; may you not sometimes think of her, who, as an artless country girl, won your young heart, as a tie which binds you to that sphere which will then perhaps no longer please, no longer content you?"

"Oh! never, never!" exclaimed Herbert, "can my heart so lose its love of goodness: and where is the sphere in which Fanny might not shine as first in loveliness and worth?"

"But are these the only considerations to which a father must look forward?" replied Mr. Seymour, "supposing that you leave the dissipated courts of India unchanged, yet are you sure that your career will be successful, and that you will return with power to fulfil

the engagement to which you would now bind yourself and Fanny?"

"No exertions on my part," said Herbert, "shall be spared to promote it; then surely I can scarcely fail if life and health be continued to me."

"It is not always that temporal advancement can be ensured by human exertion," replied Mr. Seymour, "although I am sure that none will be wanting on your part; but am I, upon the chance of all these *ifs*, to sacrifice the peace of my child, which perhaps rests upon the decision of this present hour? Supposing that I consent to the engagement you solicit, and you return still unable to meet the expenses of a family; would it not then indeed be hard, after ten years of faithful intercourse and well-tried affection, to relinquish the hope which had so long united your interests and wishes to each other? Ask not, Herbert, so great a sacrifice. Fanny is yet but a child, and in ten years, if those be granted to you both, you may return and find her still in the flower of her life; the same in heart improved in mind; and cheerful in the pursuance of duty, her cheek, I hope, will still be untouched by care; then, if circumstances permit, and your hearts remain the same towards each other, if you

have sought no brighter charm, loved no fairer flower than this simple lily of Llanvair, you may then indeed claim her as your own, and a father's best blessing shall consecrate the sacred tie."

"I believe," replied Herbert, with a deep sigh, "that you have chosen for me the path of duty. God's will be done then, and may I be enabled to pursue it in the firm conviction of his infinite wisdom in the direction of every event. As to my affection, I fear no test of time, nor can wealth buy me one blessing, if not shared by Fanny Seymour; therefore I submit, and when we meet again, my best friend," added he, taking Mr. Seymour's hand, "may it be indeed as father and son."

"Believe me, my dear Herbert," replied Mr. Seymour, "that my feelings towards you will never be otherwise, and as a fond parent will I daily implore heaven's choicest blessings for you: but it is growing late, and I must not detain you, therefore go and see Fanny, and then once more let me say, God bless you."

Herbert left him without further reply, but his heart died within him as he entered the drawing-room.

Fanny arose to meet him, and endeavouring

to assume a tone of playfulness, said, "You have left a very unequal portion of your hour for me, Herbert, and we must not forget Lady Warton's injunction:" but as she spoke, in spite of herself, tears trickled down her cheek.

"And yet," said Herbert, "I have but thrown the time away in unavailing entreaties—your father remains implacably firm."

"I was sure that he would," calmly replied Fanny, "he never refuses a boon where his child is concerned, without much previous deliberation, and I am sure without much pain; he has our happiness, my dear Herbert, too deeply at heart ever to deny any thing which can possibly promote it; let us therefore yield to his better judgment, nor add to his distress by any want of submission on our parts."

"Heaven forbid," replied Herbert, "that I should indulge a wish that could militate against your future happiness, I will therefore endeavour to bend with patience to your father's will. There is, I believe, much of *possibility* in what his clearer foresight can anticipate, but God grant it may prove otherwise, and that I may return crowned with

success, and claim his best treasure as my reward. And yet, Fanny, you may meet with many more deserving."

"Herbert, do we not part," exclaimed Fanny, interrupting him, "mutually trusted in and trusting? and though no promise binds us, and we are both left free to choose a more exalted sphere, should we regret the humbler one we now love, yet I have no fears that either heart will change; why then embitter the hope which rests on our mutual confidence in each other, by such sad forebodings? for unworthy of regret will be the one who could realize them."

"Be it so," said Herbert, "and yet absence would be less bitter if we were only permitted to correspond; will you never add to the value of your father's letters by a few lines from yourself?"

"From my father," replied Fanny, with a faint smile, "you will hear every thing that can interest you; write to him very often, and very unreservedly, and depend upon it he will never be wanting in a parent's kindness towards us both; let that be sufficient, and for the rest let us submit."

Herbert made no reply, and after a few

minutes' silence Fanny took from the table a small Bible and King's Hymns, and in giving them said, "Keep these little volumes, dear Herbert, for my sake—in reading the one, think only of its consolations, obey only its precepts; in using the other, you may sometimes believe that at the same moment we are addressing the same prayer for each other as for ourselves: and now, Herbert, let us part as brother from sister:" but in giving the mandate she became pale as death, and her words trembled on the lips that spoke them.

Herbert listened to her in silent admiration; but still unwilling to obey, he retained Fanny's hand affectionately in his own, till she suddenly withdrawing it, exclaimed, "Once more, dear Herbert, farewell! and may heaven's best blessing be with you;" so saying, she immediately left the room.

Herbert looked up as if in a dream—he had heard the door close, and Fanny's light step in the room above; but all now was silent, and he had seen perhaps for the last time, her who had shared with him all the pleasures of his childhood. He felt desolate; but never forgetting from whence strength could be derived in every hour of weakness, he fervently implored the assistance of the

Almighty, to subdue every feeling that would rebel against the unerring will of heaven ; and fortified by the prayer, he felt more resigned, and after taking leave of Mr. Seymour, he hastily turned from St. Llenard's, the peaceful scene of all his happiest hours !



CHAP. II.

“**W**HY, my dear girl,” exclaimed Caroline Herbert, one morning on entering the little drawing-room at the Hermitage, “you will really fret yourself into the grave! One would suppose that you were preparing for a pilgrimage to Mecca, and had therefore foresworn the sight of man or womankind, lest their syren smiles should win you from your purpose, and after all make you love Lymington better than the holy land, whither your vows of penance had bound you. Ah! I knew very well how this visit to Llanvair would end—in your being moped into a very model of sinless stupidity! and, in truth, you only now want a long black veil, a cross on your bosom, and a cup in your hand, to personate ‘patience on a monument,’ sighing over the sinful corruptions of this frail world! Well, save me from such goodness if religion makes every convert sit in a dark room with a Bible in one hand, and a

pocket handkerchief in the other, which I verily believe you have done ever since that precious brother of yours, Pope Perfect, sailed off to shower upon other shores the warnings and benedictions with which he used to absolve you from your daily sins."

"For once Caroline," replied Ellen, trying to look very calm, "you may be mistaken, for this book happens to be Lempriere's Classical Dictionary, and I, as far from *sinless* stupidity as you are from reason; but you must not, I assure you, take me as an example of religious happiness, which I believe you must seek at Llanvair, where you will find it in many a happy countenance, and truly see it exemplified in Fanny Seymour, who never ceases from her duty, and is therefore cheerful and light hearted, while I—sit in a dark room, not to read my Bible, but to repine at the loss of a beloved brother, who is only gone to fulfil his duty."

"And depend upon it, said Caroline, "since like a good Christian, you always find consolation in heaven's ways, never did heaven do a kinder thing to you both; for India will do Herbert as much good as Herbert's absence will do to you, since now he may chance to come back something like a human being,

whereas at present he is neither one thing nor the other; not earthly enough for man, for if he meets but a living thing on which is stamped the crime of beauty or fashion, he flies from it, as from a very basilisk; and yet he is not quite 'spirit immaterial,' for the heaven whither he would fain go before his time."

"Beauty may indeed be a basilisk," replied Ellen, looking mournfully at the lovely countenance of Caroline, really wounded by her levity, "if it thus dares to trample on the power which has bestowed it for higher purposes than to mislead and fascinate a weak and yielding mind."

"Oh! I want to trample upon nothing but melancholy, believe me, nor to mislead any thing but my own dear Ellen from her dismal thoughts," exclaimed Caroline—determined not to be angry with her friend, of whom she was resolved to make a victim in spite of Fanny Seymour and all the pious people at Llanvair; "but come," added she, "do let me draw up these doleful green blinds, and prove your righteous submission to Heaven's will by enjoying the sun which shines over you. Mamma wants you to dine with us to-day—long sleeves and all, Ellen, if you like it; and now you must come with me to see

that dismal being Mrs. Howard ; a visit which you may insert in your diary, as a visit of charity, as, poor soul, I assure you, she stands in need of spiritual consolation, for tears, I truly believe, have been her food night and day ever since the death of her son : now my going to see her in the way of comfort is of no use in the world, for when she begins crying, I cannot, for the life of me, cry with her, nor quote scripture to enforce submission : all this you can do well, and perhaps make a convert of me into the bargain ! but, dear Ellen, don't look so dreadfully serious, and then I will not laugh at you any more."

" Your laughing at me individually," said Ellen very gravely, " can never make me feel more or less serious ; but if you value your own welfare, and really wish to retain my affection, you will not thus trifle with a subject so sacred as that of religion."

" Well, don't preach," replied Caroline, " and then I'll do my best to frame my conversation according to your fancy : but tell me, will you, or will you not come out ?"

" To tell you the truth," said Ellen, " I intended calling on you this morning, to ask your assistance in a little plan I wish to execute ; I will therefore now attend you where

you please, if, on our return, you will follow me."

"Any where you like," replied Caroline, except to church, for as I wish to do all things in order, I leave week-day prayers for old people, and my own for Sundays."

Ellen would make no further reply, finding it only excited the careless levity of her friend; she therefore left her to prepare for going out; and feeling quite satisfied with herself in thus standing firm, in spite of Caroline's efforts to alarm her from duty, she only now wished that Miss Aubrey and Louis could witness her stability of principle, which enabled her to bear so patiently all the trials of Caroline's provoking insinuations.

On their leaving Mrs. Howard, Ellen told Caroline that she would now claim her for the next hour, if she could for once be steady for that time."

"Well, I really will," said Caroline, "for I want to see how you saints set about converting the wicked ones, which I conclude to be your commission with me just now."

"That would indeed be an attempt far above my powers," replied Ellen, smiling, "but I want to convert our school into something like regularity and better order; and

now that Herbert is gone, I shall have plenty of time to attend it, if you will but second my endeavours."

"Second your endeavours for what?" asked Caroline; "in the name of patience, my dear Ellen, what are you talking about."

"I am sure, Caroline, you must confess that the children of this parish are sadly neglected, and it is really a reproach to us to see the manner in which they behave at church; now I have brought from Llanvair an excellent and very simple plan of regulating a village school, and if you will but aid me in establishing such a one here, we shall be rendering an essential service to these poor children, at the expense of very little trouble to ourselves."

"Llanvair has certainly turned your head with its schools and schemes," replied Caroline, "you never dreamt of these innovations before you went there, but were perfectly satisfied with papa as your pastor, and poor old dame Coleson as presiding over the baby community at Durnford. Papa gives her thirty pounds a year, and if she did not do her duty, do you not suppose he would soon nominate a better school-mistress? but as to both children and governess I see nothing in either of them to

shock even the fine feelings of the renowned Miss Seymour, for I think dame Coleson looks very respectable at the head of thirty chubby brats every Sunday, marching one by one like a little army of Lilliputian recruits."

"The outward appearance of a school," replied Ellen, with all the patience she could command, "can signify but little, comparatively with the importance of a practical knowledge of their duty. I went yesterday to hear the children read, and was really grieved to find how perfectly ignorant they were in all their Catechisms, which they repeat like parrots, without the smallest idea of the purposes for which they learn them. Surely, then, ought not we, who have received the benefits of a good education, to use our talents to the glory of Him who gave them? and by sacrificing a very small portion of our time, we might become instruments of doing essential good to these poor children."

"Really, my dear Ellen, I scarcely find time to teach myself, and as to sitting for an hour over thirty dirty children, why, I should expect to have thirty different fevers in my blood before night."

"How then does Mrs. Coleson escape them all?" said Ellen

" Oh ! because she has been bred and brought up in the midst of them all," replied Caroline, " but, seriously speaking, depend upon it, we should do more harm than good : I am not for equalizing the world, let each be educated according to the sphere in which we are placed."

" Certainly," replied Ellen, in point of mental acquirement, but where Christianity is concerned, every human being stands alike accountable ; and the ignorance of the poor will be charged to those, who, being placed with means and opportunities of instructing them, neglect the sacred commission. I will willingly take upon myself the first trouble of regulating the school, if you will afterwards only assist me by taking a portion of pupils under your direction as a Clergyman's daughter ought to do, and situated as we are, how can I act unless abetted by you ?"

" Now, Ellen," exclaimed Caroline, laughing, " that is Fanny Seymour's speech verbatim. I give you all due credit for a good memory ; but preach to papa as the shepherd of your stray lambs, and I dare say he will profit by your lecture, and turn village tutor, in all proper submission to your authority. As to myself, I will give you *carte blanche* to act in

my name in converting the ignorance of these little lost ones to the wisdom of your own better judgment; but for the rest, excuse my declining the delightful task of rearing rustic stupidity."

"Then will you only go with me," said Ellen, with a look of earnest entreaty, "for the first few weeks at least, and then I am sure that in witnessing the advantages of duty, you will feel its importance, and it will be to you a source of pleasure?"

"For your sake, dear girl, I refuse it," replied Caroline, "for depend upon it I should do more harm in a week by my impatience than your sanctity could rectify in a month; but here comes Frederic," exclaimed she, not a little delighted in being thus released from so irksome a subject; "he is coming to meet us; an act of gallantry somewhat rare with him."

Here Frederic joined them, and after a few compliments, which might either pass for egregious flattery or wilful impertinence, he asked Ellen if rosy cheeks were the fashion at Llanvair?

"Health and happiness are so, I believe," replied Ellen, "and these may produce them."

"Then I can tell you," said Caroline, "that

they are no advantages ; I had no patience just now with that stupid hypocritical Mrs. Howard for telling you how much you were improved by your country excursion. Before you went, papa often said what a fine stylish girl you were growing, and I too began to think you would soon rival me in that delicate tint which you then had upon your cheek ; but now you are so superabundantly rosy, that you look any thing but stylish or elegant."

"Then I suppose," replied Ellen, laughing, "health must be quite excluded from the circles of elegance : however, here I must say farewell," added she, turning into a path leading to the Hermitage.

"Oh, but you will dine with us to-day ?" said Caroline. "I am sorry," replied Ellen, "that I must decline the pleasure, as mamma is very unwell, and therefore I could not leave her." "Then you never will," said Frederic, "for she is always ill, I think."

"I hope better things," said Ellen : "at present, however, my being at home is, I am sure, a comfort to her, and therefore farewell to both of you." So saying, she left them, and Frederic said, "Now, Caroline, do you not tremble for your two guineas ? here is a month at least gone by, since the wager was

accepted, and yet Ellen is not a bit nearer to us as a convert."

"I repeat it still," exclaimed Caroline, "that in twelve months from the time of her return from Llanvair, if she do not become fond of a gay life, I will pay you the wager in full value at sight."

"Well, she seems very steady to her text as yet," replied Frederic.


"Oh yes!" said Caroline, coolly; "religion with Ellen is like a new book, her head is full of it till another fall in her way. Mark my prophecy, that Aunt Selliston will fascinate her, and turn her as a magnet would the needle of a compass; for depend upon it, fascination is a charm which poor Ellen cannot withstand, and nothing will delight my good Aunty more than having the amusement of subduing the obstinacy of over-righteousness."

With this amiable prophecy both entered the rectory, and separated to their respective engagements, while poor Ellen was meditating at home on a far brighter futurity! Astonished at her own firmness in thus resisting the influence of Caroline, she now believed herself to be a decidedly firm character, and because she had twice refused to join in singing Italian

duets on a Sunday evening, although the most endearing entreaties had been used in urging it, she fancied herself an established Christian. Six weeks had now elapsed since her return from Llanvair, and yet she had consistently pursued the instructions of Miss Aubrey and Mr. Seymour, without thinking duty an irksome task, or without the least desire of joining in the gayer pursuits of Durnford; "therefore," said she to herself, "there can be no fear of my again falling under the power of the world. Pleasure to me has now lost all its charms; I no longer bask in the enjoyments which it offers, no longer shrink from the reproach which in the world must ever fall on those, who, clinging to higher delights, can forsake it, and resist its dangerous allurements. I no longer anticipate, as a dull and irksome duty, an evening spent in the sick room of my mother: I no longer fear to encounter the closeness of a village school-room; the very toil of teaching is now a delight to me; then are not these the fruits of religion? and as Mr. Seymour says, the more I advance in Christianity, the more shall I delight in obedience to Him, whose ways are righteousness, and whose righteous paths are peace! then

Louis will soon return, and in two years find me all that he can wish, and blest as his wife, may I not be a blessing to all around me ?”

Thus, alas ! Ellen argued, and always too confident in herself, ever trusting too much on her own strength, she perverted the very means of doing good into a snare for falling short of goodness ; she forgot how deceitful is the human heart, how difficult to know oneself ! how hard a struggle to subdue those rebellious feelings of human nature which war against the soul. She forgot, that of ourselves we can do no good thing, and that all our own works, unless they be the fruits of obedience and of faith, can do little towards christianity. Thus she mistook the shadow of religion for its substance ; and in clinging too securely on the one, she lost the other, and all her boasting became in vain ! She had indeed for six weeks fulfilled to the utmost her promised obedience, but she forgot that Louis had only left her three weeks, and her brother as many days. Under their influence she had therefore escaped that of another ! thus she believed she had been sufficiently tried to feel secure of now standing alone, and because she loved the novelty of duties which perhaps pleased more in the associations attached to them, than in



the actual performance of them, she believed that she had attained the very spirit of true religion: however she made many resolutions of adhering to them, and thus satisfied, she went to pass the remainder of the day with her mother, who, pleased with the attention and with the cheerful exertions of her daughter to amuse her, began to think, that after all, Ellen was improved, although a little too methodistical. They spoke much of Louis, and of their future prospects as connected with him. He had immediately, on his return from Llanvair, declared to Mrs. Irwyn his attachment to Ellen, and at the same time most honourably entered into all the conditions on which only he could hope to claim so dear a tie. To these both mother and daughter had acceded, so that he was engaged to Ellen, conditionally that he could obtain the consent of General de Rancy. His regiment was now ordered to Germany for two years, and he would therefore be enabled to go thence to Lausanne, and made no doubt of winning the compliance of his father to his wishes, provided that Ellen would not object to reside in Switzerland. Animated with these hopes, he had left England happier than he had been for some months, and under the assurance

that she now would be all he could wish, he formed a bright vision for the future. They were to correspond during his absence, unless his father adhered to his objection to such a connexion, in which case, their engagement was immediately to be at an end; and Louis under the promise of never again attempting either to see or to write to Ellen; thus were both still under some anxiety, which, together with the conviction that much depended upon her own steadiness of character, prevailed in a great measure to preserve Ellen in her wish of doing well. Although Caroline refused to assist her, she resolutely undertook the charge of the village school, and for some weeks she attended it most punctually without thinking the task a very heavy one; but at length, as winter advanced, she began to find excuses for neglecting it; the weather was either too cold or too damp; the children too, whom she had expected would under her tuition become in a few weeks models of order, regularity and learning, were still as noisy, as stupid, and as ignorant as ever. This disheartened her, and as her efforts gradually weakened, she endeavoured to plead as an excuse for her own want of perseverance, the impossibility of doing any good, where, so far from being assisted,—

children, governess, Caroline Herbert, and the season, all militated against her exertions to promote general comfort and benefit. By degrees too, her interest in the scriptures decreased. Scott was neglected, and although whenever she saw it lying uselessly upon her table, she thought of Mr. Seymour, and determined to be more assiduous in studying it, yet something occurred every day to protract the fulfilment of her intention. The season would not now admit of her reading in her own room, and she did not like to do so in the sitting-room, because it would give an appearance to others of professing the outward forms of devotion, and thus only expose it to ridicule or perhaps aversion ; but the summer would soon come, and then she would commence with fresh zeal all those duties which had been neglected from circumstances, not from dislike. Yet whenever she received letters from Miss Aubrey, Louis, or Mr. Seymour, in which were constantly repeated the most affectionate solicitude for her eternal interests, and the warmest encouragements to pursue the duties of christianity with all the zeal of a consistent and aspiring christian—when they urged her to pursue the steady course of duty in a life of vigilance, of close dependence on the grace of

God, and of unwearied activity in following his commandments, then indeed she would think how little she was obeying their precepts, and would recal those wilful omissions of duty which she had resolved so strenuously to fulfil and renewing for a few days her diligence, would rest satisfied in thus being still a religious character. But, alas! swayed by the influence of Caroline, all the precepts of her friends, and all the promises of her own deceiving heart, passed off "like the loveliness of a song," whose sweetness died when the sound was heard no more, till at last, lulled by the religion of taste, with all its "lofty accompaniments," the "religion of conscience" was allowed to sleep, and Ellen no longer listened to the voice which still called her to "repent and live."

Caroline lost no time in introducing her to Lady Selliston, to whom she had given the outline of Ellen's character, regretting that such a nice clever girl should be lost in the obscurity of "humble duties," and challenged her aunt to redeem to the world a jewel which might, with a little polish, add to the lustre of its circles. The fact was, that to Caroline, Ellen was of considerable advantage. No one could so well "*set off*" her own singing, for as

a second was her forte, Ellen's sweet voice as treble always added to the harmony, without overpowering the fine full notes of her friend. No one so well understood the touch of music when required as an accompaniment to the harp: others would allow such force to the piano, that poor Caroline's gentler cadences were lost in the deep tones of an opened pedalled bass! whereas Ellen, in modulating the one, only added sweetness to the expression of the other, and left free power for the delicate execution of Caroline. Besides all this, she was useful as a companion: not beautiful enough to be her rival, yet sufficiently elegant to do credit as her associate, too unsuspecting to be clear-sighted, and too generous to be designing, she was the very one above all others to answer the purposes of a confidante. From these alone was Caroline still anxious to retain full power over her, and therefore professed to act in all things towards her only from "sincere affection," well knowing how much ascendancy affection could obtain, and thus, when she found how much the influence of her more valuable friends had changed the bias of her mind, she resolved to leave no arts untried to subdue the principles they had instilled, and to renew all her former love of

the world. For this she well knew, that in Lady Selliston she would find a powerful agent, and therefore determined to interest her in the noble cause of poor Ellen's downfall, nor could it have fallen into more successful hands, for she was one to whom nature had given the most unbounded power of fascination.

She had been left a young and beautiful widow by the death of Lord Selliston, who bequeathed to her a large fortune, to be enjoyed at will during her lifetime, on condition that she did not form another matrimonial connexion, or the whole of it was to be given to a distant branch of the family. She had long held the reign of fashion and pre-eminence; but she found that with her youth her consequence decreased: she was no longer the centre of attraction; and although enough of beauty still remained to claim general admiration, it was no longer the resistless magnet of unrivalled power. She therefore thought of seeking another expedient still to retain the empire which she felt so unwilling to relinquish. She had heard much of Caroline's beauty, and determined to leave London for a twelvemonth to settle near her brother, and if she found that the reports of her niece's charms had not been exaggerated, she would

then offer to introduce her in a more exalted sphere, and in the mean time, till she was old enough for such an introduction, she would model her to her own purpose, and rub off every little awkwardness which might be expected in a country clergyman's daughter. With these views, she took Chilwood Park, near Durnford, where she retired on the plea of delicate health, and the desire of renewing an intimacy with the Herberts. In Caroline she was not disappointed, and was now schooling her to all the essentials of high life, that, as soon as she was eighteen, she might take her to town, and on the plea of advancing her welfare, renew her former influence in the world. Chilwood Park therefore became the scene of continual festivity ; dances, balls, and plays followed in rapid succession, that, under the name of mere "baby amusements," Caroline might be gradually initiated in all the fatigues of future dissipation ; while Lady Selliston, as the generous advocate of so much pleasure, became the theme of universal praise, and enjoyed, though to a more limited extent than she had done in higher circles, the power of pre-eminent attraction. She had been led to expect much in Ellen ; but was surprised on finding her so superior to her age and

situation. Ellen had frequently met her at Durnford, and could, after seeing her, seldom think of any thing but of Caroline's interesting, lovely aunt. Yet she had for a long time resolutely declined joining in the gaieties of Chilwood; but at last consented to pass a week there, assured that it should be quite in a social way, with no one but Caroline. She accordingly went, but resolved that she would not accept a second invitation, that to this there could be no "great objection," as a refusal would certainly appear a very ungrateful return for the marked kindness which she had received from her Ladyship. Lady Seliston had not been so long trained to the world not to understand completely the *tact* of every character; she had studied Ellen's, and determined to act accordingly, that she might be unwarily allured, not forced, to yield to the fascination of a gay career. She saw that she was proof against personal flattery, but that the flattery of endearment could win her to love any one who would judiciously bestow it. Endearment then was the weapon with which she resolved to destroy the guileless mind of her young victim; and now that she was actually under her roof, she offered the most unremitting attentions, and declared

that as her sweet little Ellen was not strong enough to bear the late hours and fatigues of a masquerade, she would defer having one till she had left her. Thus in offering apologies for Ellen's refusing to join them, she never would pretend to understand that religious feelings had any thing to do with the objections of such assemblies; and that she might obtain a more effectual sway over such "strict and prejudiced principles," she never touched on the subject of religion, and even cautioned Caroline against making it either the theme of ridicule or argument. But, while her Ladyship always spoke to Ellen in the most affectionate language, she took care frequently to speak severely *at* her; yet this was done with so much art, that Ellen was perfectly unsuspecting of her real intentions. Thus would she often censure the "*fashion*" of young ladies interfering with village schools, and the low-minded taste of finding pleasure in associating with poor people, going to listen to all their gossip and village scandal on the pretence of visiting the sick, which must, at best, be very prejudicial to the health of those unaccustomed to such close rooms. Ellen wanted courage to argue against such sophistry; she would therefore never venture a reply, though

silently she often thought of Fanny Seymour's happiness in the midst of such "low-minded pleasures." One Sunday evening Lady Selliston entered upon the subject of music, and related an anecdote of "certain young ladies" in town, who would never play and sing on a Sunday. "Of course," said her ladyship, "they are, very deservedly, quite the theme of ridicule amongst all the young men, and their affectation of religion only exposes them to tenfold observation; but some people like to be singular, and to be thought singularly good, and in refusing a most innocent recreation, would set themselves up for very standards of perfection, and every body else down for very sinners, as if no one could go to Heaven but themselves. Oh! I've no patience with your elect! the very subject makes me furious; so do, dear little Ellen," added she throwing her arm affectionately round her waist, "put me in good humour again with your sweet syren voice. Come, take the harp, and let me lose all thoughts of ill in hearing thee! Go, Caroline, open the piano, and uncover the harp, for there is something so exquisitely touching in Ellen's voice, that I always feel at peace with myself and all the world when I hear it." Caroline had obeyed

her aunt without making any remark upon what had passed, and Ellen, inwardly wishing to refuse, suffered Lady Selliston to lead her to the instrument without resistance. She determined, however, that nothing should induce her to sing any other than sacred music, and was just going to ask for one of Kelly's hymns, when Caroline placed before her "I know that my Redeemer liveth!" Ellen's unsuspecting heart immediately construed the action into extreme delicacy on the part of her friend towards her, and taking her hand, said with the most expressive smile, "This shall never be forgotten." Caroline made no reply, but received from her aunt a very significant nod of approbation, while the unconscious Ellen began the "soul-inspiring song," and impressed with the incidents which led to it, and with the sense of her own weakness, she sang, though with less power, with more feeling and pathos than she had ever done before. At the conclusion, she arose, still agitated, and with tearful eyes; but Lady Selliston, not choosing to relinquish so favorable an opportunity, pretended to attribute them to excess of sensibility, excited by the words of that "divine piece," and after complimenting her on her performance, said, with

a most fascinating entreaty, "My dear love, I will not ask for any more of Handel; your spirits are not yet strong enough for such touching melody, but pray oblige me by one more song, my favorite, 'Al desio;' it will put us all in spirits again." Ellen declared her inability to comply; but added, that she would willingly sing a hymn. This was said with considerable effort, which was not lost upon her Ladyship, who replied, "Well, I will not press you to any thing requiring so much exertion, therefore we will set aside Italian for this evening; but as you are not one of those young ladies who pretend to the affectation of over-sanctity, I know my sweet Ellen will kindly oblige me by one little duet, in which you and Caroline certainly shine, that lovely air, 'All that's bright must fade.'" Caroline remained perfectly silent, and Ellen hesitating as to how she could possibly escape, only blushed deeply, and attempted to move from the instrument. "Come, girls," said Lady Selliston, "you need not, I think, now assume shyness before me; Ellen, love, do tune the harp, it is better adapted for that style of melody than the piano, and we may well close this day with harmony, for it has been one of duty, as I believe we have all been to church

with willing hearts. By the bye, Caroline, I never heard your father preach a more excellent sermon. Come, Ellen, strike the harp for 'All that's bright,' and then we will go to bed." Ellen would gladly have been in bed at that moment, or any where, safely out of the path of temptation, which, strong as she fancied herself, she was too weak to withstand. Poor Ellen! she who had boasted of her stability, and had felt so secure of preserving good in the midst of evil! she, to whom the world possessed no charms, no power to allure from the path of duty! now wanted courage to refuse an act of absolute disobedience to the command of her God! now wanted strength to resist the fatal influence of an artful worldly-minded woman!

Caroline was first to obey the request, and taking the harp, called Ellen to accompany her, who thus was completely drawn into the very sin her heart abhorred! and why? because afraid to meet the reproach of religion, of which but a few weeks before she had made her boast, and in which she believed she could have even gloried, if exposed to the trial!

She went to bed restless and uneasy: she thought of Miss Aubrey, of Louis, and of Mr. Seymour. Oh! what would they have thought of her, could they have witnessed her sinful

weakness on that evening! and yet it had been called a "well-spent sabbath!"

"And how far has even Caroline been my superior this day," thought Ellen; "she who errs from the ignorance of a mistaken and pernicious education, yet how kindly considerate was she in even aiding me to avert the evil which still I would not resist! Kind-hearted girl! with all her faults, how far more generous has she been towards my failings than I have been to her; how delicately did she shield me from the ridicule of her aunt; she was silent where she knew my opinions differed, and, I believe, has never spoken of me but with affection; yet I have exposed *her* character, and have even suffered the censure of my own transgressions to fall upon her name! but I will better return her friendship; I will love her more gratefully, nor longer be ashamed to acknowledge her friendship as a privilege and delight."

With these thoughts, Ellen determined to return home on the morrow: "and then," thought she, "I shall soon go again to Llanvair, and henceforth I am *determined* to do my duty. Lady Selliston is truly a sweet woman, and much to be pitied, in having had so false an education; but I must not love her, since

her friendship will only prove a snare to one so weak, so easily misled!"

The morrow came, but Lady Selliston would not hear of Ellen's leaving her that day, as she expected a few friends in the evening, and could not possibly spare the "very charm of her party;" she promised faithfully, however, that on Tuesday she would send her home without any further solicitation. Comforted with this assurance, Ellen consented to remain, and when evening came, she was so much the object of attention and admiration, that she soon entered into the very spirit of pleasure, and was the "gayest of the gay."

The ensuing morning she returned, but, alas! she returned no more to duty. She began to think that religious people were perhaps sometimes led to be illiberal, for that Lady Selliston was certainly, though a thoughtless woman, kind to every one, and wishing to promote general happiness; she was only her *own* enemy: certainly not deserving of such indiscriminate censure.

Caroline, too, was a sweet-tempered girl, only volatile from being too much flattered, and too fond of pleasure from being so early accustomed to enjoy it.

But spring now advanced, and Mr. Seymour

did not forget his promise of receiving Ellen for the summer ; and, indeed, as he had lately thought her letters renewed something of their former spirit of the world, he was anxious, if possible, to save her from its influence. Both he and Fanny had therefore written in terms of earnest entreaty to Mrs. Irwyn, for Ellen to pass the ensuing twelvemonth with them, as she might travel safely under the protection of Miss Aubrey ; but Mrs. Irwyn felt her health so much declining, that she could not consent to their wishes, and in such circumstances no further solicitation could, of course, be offered. She knew, however, that such a refusal must be a great disappointment to her child, and as a reward for her bearing it so cheerfully, she promised that she would allow of her being often at Chilwood ; the distance from her being so trifling that she could at any time send for her in a few hours, should she become worse during her absence. Thus Ellen was again thrown constantly with Caroline ; and Lady Selliston, who really became fond of her, and gratified by her influence, spared no pains to please and to entice her. She loaded her with presents and every indulgence : a continued kindness which soon

won both the affection and gratitude of Ellen, to whom such ties were always binding.

Summer too, advanced, the season in which so many duties were to have been assiduously fulfilled; but, alas! all seemed forgotten in the career of pleasure into which Ellen had entered. The school was never thought of; that sacred book, the "Messenger of heaven's counsels," was laid by, and all its solemn precepts totally neglected!—even Mr. Seymour's letters afforded her but little pleasure, and to answer them became only an irksome task; Fanny was too prosy, and her "best friend," Miss Aubrey, too rigid: Louis alone retained his accustomed empire in her heart: his letters, indeed, were often illiberal towards Caroline, too strict towards herself; but still, as these errors might be traced entirely to feelings of affection and solicitude, they only produced in her mind the wish of over-ruling such prejudices: consequently, she wrote always in terms of devoted attachment, but her letters were, alas! too much filled with Caroline Herbert, the generous kindness of Lady Selliston, and the delightful innocent pleasures of Chilwood Park, to satisfy or please the reader's heart. Herbert, too, that

once dear brother, was now scarcely regretted: his letters, indeed, were always received with feelings of joy, as announcing his safety and continued happiness; but in other respects they were unheeded, or thrown by for a "more convenient season."

How could so total a change have been effected in less than a twelvemonth! Why was that heart, which at Llanvair but a few months before was so affectionate, so penitent, so humble, now so hardened, so lost to feeling, so dead in every transgression of wilful disobedience! alas! because that heart had rested securely in its *own* strength, had neglected to improve the means of offered salvation, had renounced the only power which can bless our endeavours with success! He who alone can make duty our delight, and lead us into the paths of peace, was now forsaken, and all His precepts lost! His warnings were rejected, His blessings were perverted! Where then could Ellen find a hand to guide, a pilot to direct, an anchor to uphold her, amidst the dangers of temptation? She had voluntarily, nay, obstinately, sought the precipice, on the brink of which she now stood; and relying with fearless confidence on her own stability, in persevering the path of safety, she fell! and

into that deep labyrinth, whence, alas ! retreat is almost impossible, the ascent so steep, so marked with wretchedness !

Lady Selliston was not a little pleased at having obtained such unbounded influence over Ellen ; and one day, when expatiating to Mrs. Irwyn, in most exaggerated language, on the universal admiration which Ellen excited in the fashionable world, she said that she hoped she might be permitted to claim the "little darling" as her *protégée* for the ensuing year ; that early in the spring she intended returning to town, for the purpose of introducing Caroline, and much wished that her dear Ellen might also share the same advantages ; and further requested, that the consideration of expense might be no plea against her consent, as, rather than relinquish so great a pleasure, she must be allowed to stand answerable for every charge on Ellen's account during her stay in town. To this Mrs. Irwyn alleged the same excuses, of her own ill health, as she had offered in her refusal to the Seymours ; "And," added she, "should I get better, I have promised that Ellen should pass the ensuing year at Llanvair, all other engagements must therefore be declined."

"Well, my dear Madam," replied her

Ladyship, "as Ellen's welfare is my only object in this request, no selfish considerations could induce me to advance any objection to her yielding my own solicitations to those of her country friends: I know nothing of Mr. Seymour, and make no doubt they are all very good people; but I confess I do lament that so lovely a girl should be sacrificed to the narrow prejudices which she must unavoidably imbibe in such a circle as that at Llanvair, prejudices indeed of which she is but just free, and which must, in the world, ever militate against her forming the connexion to which her talents and superior mind may so justly entitle her."

"In that respect," said Mrs. Irwyn, "you know her prospects are, I believe, settled; as your Ladyship is no stranger to the situation in which she stands in regard to Captain de Rancy, of whom I have so high an opinion, that in every respect I confess I think it a most desirable connexion."

"Oh yes," coolly replied her Ladyship, "I am perfectly aware of that circumstance, and have heard much in Captain de Rancy's praise, who, in this part of the world, is considered as quite an Adonis; but still it appears to me a very uncertain event, and the attachment

altogether the mere romantic fancy of two children : however, I can certainly have no wish of seeing it dissolved, if indeed their own happiness rests upon its issue ; but dearly as I love your sweet girl, I own I view it with regret, for she might shine in a far more exalted sphere, and I cannot bear the thoughts of such a jewel being thrown away upon a foreigner—to be lost amidst the vallies of Switzerland !”

“ My own life,” replied Mrs. Irwyn, with a deep sigh, “ is so precarious, that I have ever left Ellen, and still do so, at liberty to decide her own fate ; but in leaving her an orphan, I confess I should feel satisfied in knowing her connected with a family so nearly allied to mine as the de Rancy’s are, and therefore earnestly hope that their present engagement may be fulfilled. However, there are, I fear, many clauses against it, as I know General de Rancy is too prejudiced a man, easily to be biassed by the wishes of another.”

“ Ah !” exclaimed Lady Selliston, “ and that is one reason why I so much regret the probability of Ellen being thrown into a family where she will be, if not despised, never appreciated as she deserves, and might be elsewhere. However, my dear Madam, of


course I can have no right to interfere in your family prospects; but as at all events a year in town will be of considerable advantage to my little favorite, I hope she will be enabled to leave you with comfort, and join our party in the spring."

"Your wish is most flattering to my child," said Mrs. Irwyn, "and should I be sufficiently well to spare her, on her own will shall rest the decision; in the mean time she is at your command, as far as my consent is concerned."

"I thank you sincerely, my dear Madam," replied her Ladyship, taking Mrs. Irwyn's hand, "to part with such a companion even for a day, must, I am sure, be a great sacrifice on your part. As for the rest, I can only hope my wishes will be fulfilled, and then, as my sweet Ellen's prospects are so uncertain, in case of any disappointment respecting Captain de Rancy, her mind, being amused by the constant routine of a London life, so new to her, will not be so likely to dwell on the regrets which such circumstances might for a time excite; and then she will be on the very spot to choose a more advantageous alliance. Farewell, then, my dear Mrs. Irwyn; I can only repeat that I can have

no motive in what I urge, but the welfare of your interesting child; and if at any time I can be of the slightest use to her, never hesitate in applying to me as to her most zealous friend."

To these gracious promises and disinterested offers, Mrs. Irwyn returned all due thanks; and Lady Selliston then took her leave.



CHAP. III.

ANOTHER spring had now returned, and the last fête was preparing at Chilwood Park previously to the departure of Lady Selliston. It was to celebrate the eighteenth anniversary of Caroline's birth, and as Ellen was so nearly of the same age, the two friends were to share the honors of that day. Lady Selliston had vainly endeavoured to effect a masquerade, so many parents of the young people objecting to their children taking part in such an entertainment. A characterade was therefore substituted, and many a young heart was now full of anxiety as to what dress and character would be most appropriate for them to assume. Only a fortnight remained, and Lady Selliston declared that it was high time the plan of the entertainment should be finally arranged : and as she resolved that there should be some display of fancy to make up for the disappointment of masks, she invited a certain number of young ladies to pass the ensuing fortnight

with her, that something of a pantomimic exhibition might be produced. But without Ellen nothing could be done; she must therefore come without delay, and accordingly the carriage was ordered, and Caroline despatched with the summons from Lady Selliston.

She found Ellen unusually grave, who, on receiving the invitation, only replied, that she dared not accept it, and that she must even relinquish the prospect of sharing that happy day, her mother having received letters on business of urgent importance, which called her to Hereford, whither she must of course accompany her.

"To Hereford!" exclaimed Caroline, "what in the name of patience calls Mrs. Irwyn there, above all places in the world? However, you need not, I suppose, be tied to her apron-string all the days of your life; surely you can stay with my aunt during your mother's absence, for indeed she cannot just now do without you."

"Your aunt is always kind to me," replied Ellen sorrowfully, "but I could not see mamma go alone in her present health; and indeed when I told her so, she seemed to think it a thing of course; I dare not, therefore, even hint an objection."

"Oh! if that be all," exclaimed Caroline, "you are mine; only let me go up stairs, and I will soon obviate all difficulty." So saying, she flew up stairs, Ellen vainly endeavouring to withhold her. She found Mrs. Irwyn busily arranging papers, and thought within herself that wonders would never cease, on seeing her so engaged; however, she took no notice of so unusual an exertion, but going up to her she said, "I am quite glad to see you looking so much better, my dear Mrs. Irwyn; but I find that you are going to leave us just at a time when we are most in want of you."

"So far do I feel from being better," replied Mrs. Irwyn, looking really ill, "that I confess I dread a journey, for which at present I am wholly unequal; business, however, not pleasure, calls me away; my going, therefore, admits of no delay."

"Well, but at all events you must not think of going till after my birthday, for you know it is the last which will be celebrated; and I should not enjoy it half so much without the presence of my earliest friend," said Caroline, taking Mrs. Irwyn's hand with a *profession* of the utmost affection.

"Thank you, Caroline," replied Mrs. Irwyn,

"but long before that time I hope to be in Hereford, where I shall probably be detained a month."

"Well, this is as provoking as unexpected," said Caroline, sighing; "however, of course you will not take Ellen with you, and my aunt wishes her to remain at Chilwood till after the birth-day, if you have no objection to her returning with me now."

"Ellen's head has lately been so completely full of Chilwood, of its gay parties, and of dress," replied Mrs. Irwyn, "that her going with me will probably afford me but little comfort; she is seldom now the comfort of her sick mother, nor do I wish to make her so against her will; she may therefore do as she likes."

At this moment Ellen entered the room, anxious to hear the result of Caroline's embassy. Her mother's serious countenance foreboded little success; but Caroline, looking pleased, exclaimed, "Well, Ellen, as your going to Hereford is immaterial, you are to choose your head quarters during Mrs. Irwyn's absence. Chilwood, of course, will receive the preference."

"But should you not like me to go with

you mamma?" said Ellen timidly, half ashamed of the question.

"Of course," replied Mrs. Irwyn, "my errand to Hereford being so far from a pleasant one, to have a companion and sharer in my anxieties would mitigate their weight; but I can have no wish of retaining you from those pleasures, for which you so willingly resign a daughter's duty: but the fault perhaps is mine; I have given no charms to your home; therefore go, Ellen, and let your choice be perfectly unbiassed by my wish."

There was a tone of kindness in every word which Mrs. Irwyn had now uttered, so perfectly unlike the fretful and ungenerous disapprobation with which she generally repulsed even the better feelings of her child, that Ellen was instantly touched by such an appeal, and throwing her arms around her mother, she exclaimed, "Oh! mamma, if you had ever before told me that *I* could mitigate your anxieties, that my being with you could make you happy, a palace would have possessed no charms to draw me from my home; but I thought you never cared about me, were never pleased with my endeavours to amuse and cheer you; but, dear mamma, I will go with you: and if you will only call me your dear

girl, as Mr. Seymour calls *his* child, then indeed I will be every thing to you."

Mrs. Irwyn did not repulse, though she scarcely returned the embrace of her child, but simply replied, "If I have not the spirits of Mr. Seymour, to express the same lively feelings of parental pleasure, it is, that I have not his blessings to excite them; he has all that can gild life, while mine is bereaved of every joy. You, Ellen, are the only treasure spared me, and yet you are scarcely a comfort to me."

"Because, mamma, I thought that you would never receive comfort from my hands; you seemed to reject, rather than accept my attentions; and if I offered endearment, it seemed to worry more than gratify you: but take me to Hereford; let me be your nurse, your comfort, your treasure; and you will find how fondly I can return a mother's love."

Any feeling was easily excited in Ellen, but none so soon as that of gratitude. She now saw in her mother a new creature, and in her affection she instantly sought a new tie. She kissed her a thousand times, tears rolling down her cheek; then turning to Caroline, with a cheerful voice she positively declined going to Chilwood; but as she took leave of her,

assured her that her thoughts would always be with her.

Mrs. Irwyn had been that morning particularly excited by letters of an unexpected nature from Mr. Morris, her former Banker, whose failure involving her property, had obliged her to quit Berwyns. These letters seemed to offer a hope that some part of that property might be reclaimed ; but as it would be necessary that she should sign certain bonds and certificates, her presence was required at Hereford. Mr. Morris therefore offered to receive herself and daughter at his house, for as long a time as her stay would be necessary. This had occasioned an exertion quite new to Mrs. Irwyn ; and in looking over papers which would be required to prove her claims, ten thousand recollections of former days had been awakened, and under these, her feelings had received a renewal of parental tenderness. She believed herself to be daily sinking into the grave ; and now that a little exertion on her part might ensure some future provision for her child, she thought of Ellen and of the destitute situation in which she would be left after her death, in case General de Rancy still refused his consent to her alliance with his son. It was then too, that her past neglect of

her children crossed her mind. Conscience told her that if Ellen was disobedient and unkind, her own hand had broken the buds of filial affection. Thus was the mother now left to lament the delinquency of her child, and that child to seek from strangers the sweet tie which home had long denied her. And thus, alas ! will every bond of earth be dissolved, which is not first cemented by the power of christianity ; for it is religion that can best unite the happiness of even nature's dearest connexions. Whether it be mother to child, sister to sister, friend to friend, if the sacred bond be once broken, which only can unite us to each other, as uniting us in Christ, every blessing must weaken ; our fold must be divided, our dearest ties be dissolved ; since even nature is too weak to bind those divided from the great Shepherd, who bids us all take up one common cross and follow Him.

But Mrs. Irwyn had neglected the advancement of her children's welfare, believing that they might choose the way to Heaven most pleasing to themselves ; till now she found, too late, that *one* only had been ordained, from which no foot can safely turn ; that neglecting the chart erected in the gospel for our safety, she had gone astray ; her own heart therefore,

not a hard fate, was now the cause of restlessness and discontent.

These reflections had been passing in her mind; when Caroline entered the room, and the bitterness they had awakened was scarcely subdued; when Ellen again roused the latent anguish of self-reproach. She then expressed the feelings with which her heart was full; her child was touched by them, had promised all that could satisfy the parent, had granted all that she could have asked; and the exertion over her wishes obtained, Mrs. Irwyn again relaxed into her usual tone of discontent.

Ellen returned to her mother's room determined cheerfully to assist in the preparations for the journey; but in spite of every effort to amuse and please her, Mrs. Irwyn's brow was again clouded, and her smiles were gone.

Ellen talked in all her sprightliness of fancy, of the property likely to be reclaimed; the delight of again possessing Berwyns, and the happy changes which another week might effect; but she was scarcely heard or heeded, and if her mother spoke it was only to give—~~not~~ directions, but commands. All this did but renew the reserve on one side, and discontent on the other; and though Ellen went to bed satisfied with herself for having yielded to

her mother's wishes, rather than to the entreaties of Caroline, she, alas ! almost regretted the sacrifice, so little was duty the principle of action with that self-willed girl.

Caroline, vexed at being frustrated in her errand to the Hermitage, returned to Chilwood full of spleen against Mrs. Irwyn, determined if possible to persuade her aunt to over-rule Ellen's sudden fit of filial obedience.

Lady Selliston accordingly promised to go early the next morning, resolved to conquer every objection made by mother and daughter, against her retaining Ellen as long as her own convenience might require it. Unfortunately, armed with all the powers of a very Calypso, she reached the Hermitage just as Ellen and her mother had been arguing upon some trifling disagreement about Herbert, consequently Ellen was now little disposed to resist the entreaties of Lady Selliston, whose voice she no sooner heard than she ran forward to receive her caresses. She guessed the purport of her visit : then again the jubilee with all its anticipated delights arose to her imagination ; and while pleasure awakened to entice another votary within her silken spells, conscience was allowed to sleep, and its " still small voice," which would have warned her to

beware, was lost in the syren sounds which now, alas ! so fatally allured her, (ah ! little did she think so,) to a destiny of endless self-reproach.

Mrs. Irwyn silently heard the arguments alleged against the necessity of taking Ellen on a journey, which was merely one of business ; and still leaving Ellen free to choose her path, she remained as if perfectly indifferent to the decision.

Lady Selliston saw how much depended on her own perseverance, and finding that Ellen wavered, became the more eloquent in her cause ; till Ellen was at last persuaded that “ really her going to Hereford was very unimportant, as she could be of no use in the midst of lawyers and law-papers, and that Russell, as being more accustomed to her mother’s ways, would be of greater comfort and assistance.” She consented to accompany Lady Selliston ; and after a few arrangements which this sudden change of plan required, she took a hasty leave of her mother, assuring her that if her stay were prolonged, she would cheerfully join her in a few weeks.

Mrs. Irwyn, who had shown no signs of disapprobation, seemed perfectly satisfied with this plan ; but as Lady Selliston returned once

more to say farewell, a tear glistened in the mother's eye; though the feeling perhaps was transient which had called it there, but unknown to Ellen, it died unheeded by the cold heart to which it had appealed.

No sooner had Ellen reached Chilwood, than she felt dissatisfied under the consciousness of her own weak and sinful desertion of duty. She longed to return home and choose a better part, but it was too late; and vainly endeavouring to banish the reproach of her heart, she sat down bitterly lamenting the instability of her own principles. "Oh!" said she, "why am I always thus the creature of ungoverned feelings? Acting from the impulse of momentary passion, I am ever the victim of passing influence; and heedless of reason's better dictates, I run from happiness and from peace." These salutary reflections were, however, interrupted by the entrance of Caroline and Lady Selliston: she followed them down stairs, and every painful remembrance was soon lost in the anticipations of the approaching jubilee.

The plan of the pantomime was placed before her, and her imagination soon caught the vivid coloring of Lady Selliston's ingenious fancy. Caroline, the queen of the gala, was

to personate Night; Ellen to be Aurora, and a certain number of young ladies to take parts with each as planets, satellites, seasons, and hours. These being selected from a list of those most likely to do credit to their respective characters, invitations were immediately dispatched to them; and in a few days, Chilwood Park was filled with young girls, fancy milliners, painters, and workmen of every description, and the whole house soon converted into fairy-land.

The morning previously to the birthday, Lady Selliston came to Caroline with a countenance of unusual consternation, and exclaimed, "Only think how provoking! here is a packet containing letters from Russell for Ellen and myself, to say that as Mrs. Irwyn is extremely ill, Ellen must go to Hereford without delay, and that a servant will be at Warminster tomorrow to meet her. What is to be done! for we shall never find another Aurora—besides, there is no time now for any alteration."

"Oh! her going is out of the question," replied Caroline, "for without her, our evening will now be quite spoilt. Not one of those Italian duets will I sing with any one else; and who could take her place in the waltz and allemande, which will be the principal

display? What nonsense to be sure! it is only one of Mrs. Irwyn's nervous whims, so why say any thing about it to Ellen?—we can always deny having received the parcel, and if Mrs. Irwyn gets worse, she will soon send off another despatch, which will signify little after the dance.”

“I fancy,” said her Ladyship, “that the poor woman is really ill, as Russell says she has two physicians to attend her; however, we all know that Mrs. Irwyn is easily frightened, so I may just set aside my letters till after to-morrow, for as you say, one day can make no great difference; but we must keep our own counsel, and say nothing to Ellen till after the dance, and then I will give her the information as if it were just received.”

This was accordingly agreed, and Lady Selliston, happy in having so “famously settled the matter,” renewed all her toils as directress of the festive scene.

That morning's post also brought Ellen a letter from Miss Aubrey;—once, oh, how eagerly would she have received it!—but something of shame now came across her, as she felt how little she deserved such a remembrance; and almost dreading its contents, conscious of meriting only reproach, she left

it some time unopened. When she had finished her work, however, she retired to her room, and taking her letter, read as follows:—

“ My dear Ellen,

“ I cannot leave Ashfield, where I have been passing the last week with Mrs. Warton, without writing a few lines to apologize for my apparent neglect in not having called on you, which I fully intended doing previously to my quitting this neighbourhood; for, although my society would probably have been only an interruption to those pursuits into which you have engaged with an avidity that I should once have believed impossible, yet the interest I must ever feel in your behalf would have induced my meeting the risk of an unwelcome reception. I am, however, obliged to give up all hope of seeing you, being unexpectedly called to Llanvair, where I am going in a few days, and shall be happy in conveying any letters from you.

“ Many enquiries will, I am sure, be made by those kind friends so deeply interested in your welfare. I wish, Ellen, that you could empower me to communicate what would give us all so much pleasure to hear—that

you were advancing in a course of Christianity, delighting more and more in all the duties attached to it. But, alas! what can I now say, if I take report as my authority? that Ellen is the ‘toast of fashion, and the plaything of Lady Selliston.’ Such praises, I fear, will give little pleasure to those who, unaccustomed to the parade of display, will consider them only as sad tokens of a dissipated mind. Oh! Ellen, what volumes might be written on the dangers into which you have thrown yourself! yet are you sure that you can, as a Christian, resist their allurements, and in the midst of them, conscientiously discharge the duties to which you are bound by the commands of your Creator? or do you rest contented in their neglect, defying the authority of the Most High? I do not condemn you, my dear Ellen, as doing so, the truth rests between the Almighty and your conscience; and earnestly do I hope, that in his sight you are free from such an accusation: but let me solemnly urge you to beware of the influence of pleasure, lest in listening to its syren voice you fall its victim.

“ Yet why should I presume to interfere? my cautions will only be thrown aside as ‘*too prosy*,’ or you will regard them merely as the

illiberal warnings of one judging from the evidence of only outward appearances; but I could not write to one whom I have so sincerely loved, without once more offering the dictates of affection. I need not say, how much we all regret that we now hear so seldom from you; but I fear we must expect no amendment, while more pleasureable engagements so fully occupy your time. I will not therefore intrude any further claim on your attention, aware that a correspondence bearing restraint, can give little satisfaction to either party; and yet this could scarcely be avoided, where, with such opposite pursuits, we could find few subjects of mutual interest. Should you, however, at any future time require any assistance or advice, you may securely rely on mine, so far as I can offer them, assured that I shall ever be your friend.

“ Dear Fanny is quite well, always happy in the discharge of her duty. I rejoice to hear such good accounts of your excellent brother. I find, from Lady Warton, that he is now an interpreter of Oriental languages, which has given him a considerable advantage; and that he has also undertaken the missionary cause with great success. India seems to possess few charms to him. He has encountered all its

temptations, yet in the midst of them he seems to be advancing in Christianity and honor. What a blessing is this, Ellen, to all who love him ! Fanny tells me that poor Susan Elliott is at last released ; her sufferings were very great ; but she patiently supported them, and died full of hope, in the assurance of a glorious resurrection, through the merits of her Redeemer !

“ Mrs. Warton unites in kind regards to you, my dear Ellen, and with the same sentiments I remain your’s, very affectionately,

“ AGNES AUBREY.”

Every remembrance of Llanvair was powerfully awakened by this letter, and Ellen sighed as she thought of those friends whose affection she had so justly forfeited by her neglect. “ Fanny may indeed well be happy,” said she within herself, and *I* too was happy at Llanvair, but they none of them love me now ; and yet Miss Aubrey little knows how often I am wretched in the midst of all this parade of pleasure ! It will, however, soon be over, and then I will retrieve the past. I wish I had gone to Hereford with mamma, but it is useless wishing any thing now.” Tears filled her eyes, for dissatisfied with herself, she was

unhappy, and vainly did she struggle against the conviction of conscience. She resolved to write immediately to Miss Aubrey and Fanny, to solicit a renewal of their affection, and to promise amendment; but scarcely had she begun doing so, when Caroline called her away, and long before the post hour arrived, Miss Aubrey and Fanny, her good resolutions and the letters, were altogether forgotten.

The happy day now arrived, and after an early dinner, Lady Selliston began the important business of dressing first herself, and then her young partisans. Spring with its flowers, Summer with its fruits, Autumn with its coronet of wheat, and Winter bound in chains, frosted over to represent ice, formed fanciful contrasts.

Lady Selliston, having attired her "little fairies," as she styled them, seemed quite delighted with this display of her own fancy; but looking for Ellen, was surprised to find her in the hands of a servant, who loudly declared that "Miss Irwyn had quite spoiled her beautiful dress by such old-maidish whims." Lady Selliston sprang forward to learn the cause of this sudden ejaculation, and found that Ellen would not submit to the indelicacy of such "*very* short sleeves." Lady Selliston,

really vexed, declared that she would rather dress a thousand such as Caroline, than one so provokingly perverse as Ellen, and was warmly contesting the point with her when the bell rang which was to summon Night and Morning, planets, stars, hours, and seasons, to their respective stations. "There!" exclaimed her Ladyship, "you, whom I drest the first, are now the last to be ready; provoking girl! but you shall not," added she, hastily looping up the sleeves, "muffle yourself up as if on a journey to Lapland!—but come, we have not another moment to lose."

Ellen cast another look upon the glass, to see if she could really venture to display such a dress. She certainly never looked so well, and as Caroline was not ashamed of *her* white arms, which were even more indelicately exposed than her own, she silently followed Lady Selliston to the saloon prepared for the magic scene. The guests were all arrived, and as Jews, Turks, Grecians, flower-girls, and fortune-tellers, had now filled the rooms. The pantomime then opened, and being concluded by the meeting of Day and Night, the performers mingled with the other guests in the midst of general applause. Joy seemed to be the common feeling: the young people

were animated, and the old were happy in witnessing the mirth of others.

George Melford, a young and dissipated college companion of Frederic's, who had long considered himself as a favorite with Caroline, claimed her for the first quadrilles. Frederic next led Ellen as his partner; but while Caroline was debating about her choice of quadrilles, Frederic turned to Ellen and said, "I suppose you have seen your cousin?"

"Cousin!" exclaimed Ellen, "what cousin?"

"Louis de Rancy," replied Frederic coolly; "he dined with us to-day, and came here, as I thought, to see you, but it seems that was a secondary purpose."

"And is he in this very house?" asked Ellen faintly.

"He was in this very room not half an hour ago," replied Frederic, "but I fancy he preferred the real to the ideal heaven; for as soon as yon plaything opened," added he, pointing contemptuously to the saloon, "he was off, and as I thought he looked somewhat like Banquo's ghost, I followed the restless spirit, and found him star-gazing in the corridor; he complained that the heat of this room, together with the fatigue of a long journey, had rather wearied soul and body, so I left him to recruit

both in the pure atmosphere of a March midnight."

Frederic, who always delighted in teasing Ellen whenever he could so retaliate her known dislike to him, would probably have prolonged the subject in sharper insinuations, had she not, pale as death, entreated him to lead her away. He took her to the nearest seat, and sorry for the evident emotion which he had thus wantonly excited, forbore further remark; for though he was a dissipated character, he was not void of the milk of human kindness.

The dance was now waiting for them, and Lady Selliston coming forward to enquire the cause of such a delay, desired Frederic to take another partner, and then asked Ellen what ailed her. "Oh! take me out of this room," said Ellen, "do take me away, for waltzing has made me so sick and giddy, that indeed I cannot dance any more."

"Do not say that, my love," replied her Ladyship, "air and some lavender drops will soon restore you both to spirits and to pleasure; I fear that you have exerted yourself too much; but come with me, you will, I dare say, soon be well again." So saying, she led her up stairs; and when they were alone, Ellen exclaimed, "Do let me go to bed, for indeed

I feel very ill. Oh! what will Louis say to me! what will he think of me!"

This exclamation solved the problem of her indisposition, but Lady Selliston, assured that Louis could know nothing of Mrs. Irwyn's illness, was relieved in believing herself secure on that subject. She therefore endeavoured to soothe her young charge, and replied, "What will he think of you? why only that he never saw you look so well; therefore pray keep up your spirits, for these pale cheeks do not at all accord with the rosy smiles of morning. It was, however," added she, feigning to misunderstand the feelings which had been excited, "very inconsiderate of Captain de Rancy, to give you so sudden a surprise, for agreeable as it may be, your spirits are not strong enough to be so trifled with."

"Oh! exclaimed the self-accused girl," it is I only who am inconsiderate; but I am always weak, sinfully weak."

Lady Selliston, dreading the result of any further self-examination, pretended not to understand the nature of these reproaches, and therefore changing the subject, she said, "come, love, your cousin is, I fancy, now in the dancing-room, and, I dare say, anxiously awaiting you, so let me bathe your eyes with

rose water, and then I will resign you to his charge for the remainder of the evening. Seriously, however," continued her Ladyship, in a tone of slight displeasure, "I entreat you for *my* sake now to exert yourself, for remember that I have lavished much trouble and expense in securing for you a happy evening."

This appeal to Ellen's gratitude had all its desired effect; she felt how much was due from her to her benefactress, as she blindly called her false friend, and though she felt wholly unequal to support the part assigned her, after some effort to assume a more cheerful countenance, she followed Lady Selliston, and again joined the "motley crew."

Louis was indeed amongst them, but being in earnest conversation with Caroline, at the upper end of the room, he did not observe Ellen's return. "And does she really know that Mrs. Irwyn is ill?" anxiously enquired he.

"As to that," replied Caroline, "she is always ill, and if Ellen fretted at every little nervous fit, she would soon be as bad as her mother. However, Mrs. Irwyn certainly complained of being unwell before she went."

"But I understood," said Louis, "that letters had arrived express from Hereford, to inform Ellen of her mother's dangerous relapse,

and to request her immediate attendance there."

"Oh yes," replied Caroline carelessly, "I believe there was a letter came this morning to that purpose, but I really know nothing about it, only that we all thought it would be absurd in Ellen to go away till after the dance, as one day could make no great difference."

Louis made no other reply than a deep sigh; but thought within himself, "Can this really be the same Ellen, who, at Llanvair but a few months ago, delighted in soothing the lonely hours of a poor cottager, and who now can mingle with a scene like this, when her mother may be suffering the last agonies of death? Oh! where will my delusion end!"

The black picture still filled his imagination, when Lady Selliston, gently tapping his shoulder, recalled him to the reality before him: he started, but did not reject the hand of Ellen, as her Ladyship placed it on his arm, gaily bidding him to take charge of her little sensitive. She then left them, and Louis silently led Ellen to a seat, where they might be least likely to excite observation. Neither spoke for some minutes, when Louis at last ventured to express his surprise on finding her there, "for," said he, "I expected to hear

of your being at Hereford with your sick mother."

"Ellen blushed deeply as she replied, "My mother went there merely on business; my going with her therefore seemed unnecessary."

"But is she not very ill?" said Louis.

"She is certainly far from being well," replied Ellen; "but you know she is always more or less an invalid, and I trust change of scene will be of great benefit to her."

Louis, who conceived this to be a mere prevarication, and said under the same feeling with which Caroline had supposed that "a day would make no difference," although a mother's life was in the question, replied with some severity, "And yet the anxiety which must ever attend matters of business, is, I should think, a sad companion of solitary hours. Poor Mrs. Irwyn! were Herbert in England, she would not be so deserted."

Ellen truly felt how just was that reproach, and yet she little thought under what suspicions it was given. Her own conscience, however, had so severely accused her, that she could now ill bear the accusations of another; she knew that they were just, but she thought a generous heart would not have added to the sufficient agony of self-reproach;

she therefore sat sullenly silent. Frederic at that moment came up to her, and taking her hand, said, "Come, Ellen, the Spanish dance is called for, in which you are engaged to me. I am not going to be cheated by another fainting fit, so come along, for as Louis does not seem to be in a dancing humour, he can have no objection to your choosing another partner."

Ellen withdrew her hand, assuring him that she could not dance any more; upon which another appeal was made to Louis, who only replied haughtily, "Miss Irwyn, I should suppose, is entirely guided by her own wishes, mine can have no influence over her in any way." So saying, he arose, but had he possessed the spells of a magician, he could not have so changed Ellen, as by the bitterness of that last look. One kind word would totally have subdued the pride which rebelled against her better self; but that unexpected reproach again roused every angry feeling, and gave an energy which reason in vain had endeavoured to supply. She gave her hand to Frederic, and as a new creature, she now smiled, danced, and waltzed, with all the spirits of a light heart; her countenance became animated and her cheek flushed—but

alas! it was the flush of angry passion, and while she was inwardly wretched, she seemed the gayest and happiest of the party.

Louis gave one last look as Ellen mingled with the dancers, and then hastily left the room. He ordered his horse and turned to the deserted Hermitage, where he knew that he might command bed and board.

His ride was but a melancholy one; the moon shining in majestic grandeur, surrounded by ten thousand stars, recalled to his mind the mimic scene which he had so lately left. He could not but compare it with that now before him, and as he did so, he said within himself, "Earth in vain aspires to catch the semblance of Heaven, and human beings to wear the garb of excellence! Earth and earthly things are still deceitful, and he that clings to them for happiness must be taught how fallacious is the hope which rests on any thing so frail. How unlike is that chaste moon to her, who in its representation disguised a heart so guilty; and poor Ellen, to the sweet morning whose peace she could so ill assume. Such is the difference between Heaven, the reality of joy, and Earth with all its visionary dreams! There only can goodness dwell unmixed with sin, while here, our dearest hopes are blighted by

disappointment!" With these reflections he reached the Hermitage, and having learnt all the particulars of Mrs. Irwyn's illness, he called for pen and ink, and retired to his room.

Morning found Ellen feverish and wretched. Fatigued from the exertions of the preceding day, and miserable in the remembrance of its events, she had passed hours of painful suspense. She knew that she had seriously wounded Louis, and that nothing could vindicate her desertion of her mother. He was always disgusted by any thing like exhibition in a female; and as she remembered this, and thought of the disgraceful dress in which he had just seen her, she believed that she had irrevocably offended him.

Scarcely had she finished dressing, when Lady Selliston entered the room, with a countenance of feigned distress, and giving Ellen a packet, which she said had just arrived from Hereford, consoled with her on its contents, regretting that she must so soon be deprived of her little favorite.

Ellen scarcely heeded these flattering compliments, but making no reply, she calmly read Russell's letter, in which she was directed to take a servant with her as far as Warminster, where another would be in readiness to

accompany her the remainder of the journey, that no delay might prevent her reaching Hereford as soon as possible, Mrs. Irwyn being considered in some danger.

Lady Selliston, who had prophesied to Caroline that of course she must submit to witness a fine scene of hysterics and fainting, was surprised in seeing Ellen so calm. She was indeed pale as death, and her lips trembled as she endeavoured to speak with assumed composure; but no tears followed, scarcely a sigh was excited, though had Lady Selliston better understood the real feelings of the human heart, under the impression of such deep sorrow, she would have known it to be the calmness, not of apathy—but of despair. Ellen, however, now felt the necessity of immediate exertion, and therefore patiently followed Lady Selliston to the breakfast-room. Caroline, untouched by the affliction of her friend, merely expressed herself vexed by the unwelcome summons, and concluded her condolences by saying that she made no doubt Mrs. Irwyn would soon recover, she began her criticisms on the persons and the dresses of those who had assembled there the preceding night.

George Melford seemed to be in all her thoughts. His waltzing, his dancing, and his

singing, were themes of endless encomiums ; and she declared, "that he was by far the most handsome in the room, although Louis de Rancy was there."

Ellen tasted but a very small portion of her breakfast, and then left the room to prepare for her melancholy journey, without a wish of hearing the further discussion of her unfeeling friend. With a heavy heart and bitter reflections, she began the necessary preparations, when the servant brought her a letter, which had just been left by a messenger from the Hermitage, saying that it required no answer. Ellen felt immediately relieved when she saw that it came from Louis, as she hoped it might lead to a reconciliation ; but she forgot that although duty is easily neglected, its neglect cannot be so soon forgiven nor atoned, till she found how fatal even to earthly hope are the consequences of indiscretion, which the following letter but too truly proved.

"It would be impossible, and perhaps needless, for me to describe the anguish with which the events of last night have filled my heart. It is not, however, to make any further appeal to your feelings, that I now address you. Your own hand gave the blow which has at once destroyed the fairest hope of my

life, which for years had but too fondly centered in yourself—I must therefore patiently bear the just punishment of my idolatry. But as our mutual happiness requires an immediate decision, I will not delay the painful task of resigning the claim which you had bestowed, and of releasing you from an engagement, which must, I am sure, be only one of bondage to you, since the contrast of our pursuits and dispositions is too great ever to unite us with any comfort to each other. This is indeed a painful conviction, the more so as it remains the only barrier, but alas ! too powerful a one, to the consummation of those hopes, so long cherished between us, now never to be realized ! I do not reproach you, Ellen ; I can have no right to interfere with the line of happiness you have chosen. Your own heart guided the preference of dissipation ; and since the voice of christianity, and the influence of your Llanvair friends, have failed in teaching you the principles of duty and of true happiness, vain must be *my* wishes, useless *my* efforts, to lead you to the one, or to secure to you the other. Our views of life are different, different therefore must be our path. A few months ago, Ellen, I left you all that I could wish ; and assured that the want of stability,

which had once deceived you, was but the weakness of giddy childhood; I rested on the hope of finding you, on my return, matured in excellence and principle. Oh! how fondly have I pictured to my father the daughter whom he might proudly own; and when at length subdued by my entreaties, and trusting to my judgment, he kindly sanctioned our alliance, on the condition that Switzerland should be our home, I believed myself secure of every earthly happiness, till the altered style of your letters alarmed me; by corroborating a report which reached me, of your having fallen the votary of fashion! Yet still unwilling to believe it, I obtained a short leave of absence, that I might form a fairer judgment, and arrived last night harassed with all the anxiety of such an errand; when, alas, the dress alone, in which I found you, proved the report but too justly founded. Not only did I find the mind of Ellen enslaved by the flattery which it once abhorred, but her heart dead even to the feelings of filial, nay, of human tenderness; for while the mother was vainly calling for her child, to soothe perhaps the last hours of life, that child, mingled in all the revelries of dissipation, unchecked even by the

remembrance of a parent's suffering! Could I then take such to be the daughter of General de Rancy, and proudly own her the wife of Louis? Could I take the puppet of a pantomime, as an ornament to Switzerland? Oh! no, Ellen, justice to my father, to myself, and to my country, forbids so disgraceful an alliance.

"Farewell then for ever!—yet in closing this last communication, let me entreat—let me urge you, as you value the love of Heaven, to remember your Creator, while time is yet your own. Oh! turn to Him who still waits to be gracious, for He only can break those chains of misery and sin by which you now are fettered! I speak not for your *temporal* happiness—that, alas! must be no longer an interest with me; but a higher and more important one claims the appeal—for oh! Ellen, if you would obtain the peace of God here, and life hereafter, return ere it be too late, in humble penitence, to the Saviour who only can bestow them!

"That these may be your final portion, shall ever be the earnest prayer of

"Your brother's friend,

"LOUIS DE RANCY."

Poor Ellen little expected this last trial; and overcome by such complicated misery, she sobbed as if her heart would break. She felt that the punishment was just, though heavily it had fallen. She had deserted her duty, had yielded to the obstinacy of an ungoverned spirit, and she knew that the past could admit no reparation; but to lose the esteem of one, to whom she had ever looked up as the arbiter of her happiness, was more than she could bear. "Yet," thought she, "bad as I am, he even thinks me worse. Well might he turn from me, disgusted by the heartless levity of which he believed me guilty! His love is lost, but I will not sink so deeply in his esteem—he shall at least know that I was ignorant of my mother's illness. Dear, dear mamma—heaven grant that her life be spared, and then, although my heart be broken, it shall henceforth be devoted to her and to my duty!"

She then wrote to Louis, assuring him of her total ignorance respecting her mother's illness, confessed herself unworthy of his continued affection, and concluded by entreating, that in writing to Herbert, he would, as far as possible, consistently with the justice due to himself, palliate her conduct, that he might

be spared the anguish it must inflict—and then bade farewell for ever! She offered no vindication of her conduct, made no profession of intended amendment: too much humbled under the sense of her aggravated weakness, she now patiently submitted to its consequences. Having concluded her letter, she sent a messenger immediately to the Hermitage, and desired that her servant would attend her without delay. This done, she felt her mind relieved, and now prepared for her journey: she took the jewels with which she had been ornamented, and went to return them to Lady Selliston. Caroline, who was sitting with her, arose as Ellen entered, and bade her be comforted, as no doubt her mother would soon be well. To this she made no immediate reply, but having silently restored the pearls to their owner, she asked Lady Selliston if, on the preceding day, she had received any intimation of Mrs. Irwyn's illness? Her Ladyship confused by the unexpected question, blushed, but still evaded it, when Ellen turned to Caroline and said, "Did Louis say nothing of it to you during the conversation in which I saw you engaged?"

"He said something about it," replied Caroline, "but I told him, that knowing your

mother to be soon frightened, we had all agreed that your going till after the dance was quite unnecessary." "When did that packet arrive then?" said Ellen, assured that some deception had been practised towards her.

"Oh! it came yesterday morning," replied Lady Selliston, finding that further disguise was useless; "but indeed, my love, in consideration to your feelings, I determined to conceal its contents till after the dance, unwilling to spoil the pleasure of your evening."

"Pleasure indeed?" exclaimed Ellen, as the whole truth flashed across her mind; "but did you not tell Louis," added she, addressing herself to Caroline, "that I knew nothing of this sad summons?"

"How could I enter into long discussions in a ball room?" replied the designing girl, "I told him we all thought one day could make no great difference in your journey, and I am sure I forget what further excuses I made."

Ellen, unable to support herself, sunk on a chair, and in a tone of the deepest agony exclaimed, "Oh! what endless wretchedness has that day of pleasure cost me, which was anticipated with such impatient delight!—Little did I think, when the delusive picture hung before me, what a dreadful perspective

it concealed ; but I deserve every punishment, and God in his justice now leaves me to the bitterness of remorse."

Lady Selliston was alarmed by the look of pale despair with which this was spoken, and endeavoured, by the fondest endearments, to soothe her unhappy victim. But all were useless and unheeded, as Ellen now only saw in Lady Selliston the author of her present distress.

The servant who was to accompany her to Warminster soon arrived with a post-chaise. She returned her young mistress the letter she had sent to Louis, telling her that he had left Lymington early that morning, nor did she know where he was gone.

Lady Selliston, who thought Ellen very unfit for the journey, urged her to wait another day ; but Ellen, anxious to leave a scene of so much misery, exclaimed, " Oh ! no, I have delayed but too long, not another hour will I remain." So saying, she took a hasty leave of Lady Selliston and Caroline, and drove from Chilwood, bitterly lamenting that she had ever been tempted to enter it.

CHAP. IV.

IT was nearly dark when Ellen and her attendant reached Hereford. On alighting at the humble lodging of her mother, she sprang forward, and without noticing Russell, she ran up the narrow staircase, wildly exclaiming, "Oh! where is mamma! I will—I must see her!" The door of a small sitting-room opened, and Mr. Seymour gently taking Ellen's hand, led her in and bade her be composed.

The surprise and shame of meeting one whom she had so ungratefully neglected, recalled her to herself; and hiding her face with both her hands she said, "Oh! Mr. Seymour, spare me from reproach, I could not bear it now—but do take me to dear mamma; I am very, very wretched, and yet I will not cry—and if she sleeps, indeed I will not wake her."

Mr. Seymour was sincerely touched by her distress, and knowing how largely he must yet add to her cup of sorrow, he replied, with

a tone of deep compassion, "She is not asleep, my poor Ellen; but be composed, and presently you shall see her."

"Yes, yes," she exclaimed, "I am composed;" then looking up suspiciously, as if she dreaded further enquiry, she added, "Oh! Mr. Seymour, my earliest, best friend, do not tell me that mamma is dead! She must live to forgive me; for I cannot bear this agony of remorse."

"It is not by this despair, Ellen, that you can atone for the past," replied Mr. Seymour; "but if you would seek the forgiveness of your heavenly Father, prove your penitence by now submitting patiently to His unerring will, whether the issue terminate in life or death."

"Then she is not *really* dead," said Ellen, "and I may yet receive her blessing and forgiveness. Oh! Mr. Seymour, lead me to her this moment, and bid her live to bless me! Surely she will know her child, and speak to her poor Ellen one word of kindness, for I cannot support this dreadful dispensation."

"It is indeed an awful one," replied Mr. Seymour, scarcely knowing how to soothe the wretched girl; "but let us not call it dreadful; rather let us turn to our God in prayer, that it may be made one of mercy to you."

"Oh! there can be no mercy for me," exclaimed Ellen, in a tone of despair; "I am too wicked to deserve it: but talk not now of comfort, take me to mamma: living or lifeless, I *will* see her."

Mr. Seymour endeavoured to dissuade her from so doing till she was a little more composed; finding, however, that all resistance was unavailing, he led her to the sick room, entreating her to command herself, for the sake of her mother; but when she saw the senseless form of her, from whom she had parted so unkindly, all the bitterness of self-reproach returned, and falling on the bed, she gave way to all the violence of unsubdued grief.

Mrs. Irwyn, who had been for some hours in a state of insensibility, was suddenly roused by the sobbing of her child; and looking wildly round her, she asked, who it was that thus disturbed her?

It was enough that Ellen heard her mother's voice, and raising herself with the energy of anxious, agonizing hope, she caught the cold hand of her expiring parent and exclaimed, "Dearest mamma, it is I, don't you know your child, your own poor Ellen? Oh! do not spurn her from you, look at her once again, speak, if only one word more!"

Mrs. Irwyn spoke not, but looking earnestly at Ellen faintly smiled, while a tear glistened in her languid eye, as it again closed to insensibility.

Ellen pressed her parent's hand more closely to her bosom, as if fearful that the vital spark should expire ere she could once more arouse her to a sense of tenderness, and then exclaimed with an imploring voice, "Mother! my own dearest mother, have pity on me, for I am wretched! do but tell me that you forgive me, for indeed I did not know how ill you were."

Mrs. Irwyn, again starting from her lethargy, fixed her eyes upon the countenance of Ellen, although scarcely sensible of the appeal which had thus roused her; and unconscious of any thing to forgive, she faintly said, "I thought you would come to me, Ellen:" then raising her head from the pillow and laying it on the bosom of her child, she immediately expired.

Ellen for some moments hung over the corpse of her mother in speechless agony, then throwing her arms round her neck she sobbed as if her heart would break. Mr. Seymour allowed her undisturbed indulgence, as he baled those tears, bitter as they were, a relief which despair had long denied her; but

at length alarmed by the vehemence of her grief, he carried her out of the room and desired Russell to put her in bed, while he went for medical assistance.

Faintings and hysterics rapidly succeeded, and when Mr. Hervey arrived, he found her in high delirium. The usual remedies were, however, applied, and in a few hours she became more calm. Mr. Seymour, assured that every relief had been administered, left her to the care of Russell and the woman of the house, and retired to his own room to pray for the unhappy girl, and to seek support for himself in the strength of God.

Mrs. Irwyn had suffered much from the fatigue of her journey, and on her arrival at Hereford complained of being so unwell, that she preferred taking a lodging rather than accept the offer of Mr. and Mrs. Morris, to make their house her abode. Russell often entreated that she would send for advice, but she always replied that it was useless, for that nothing could now avail her. Such language was, however, so common with her, that Russell would scarcely have heeded it, had not an evident alteration in her mistress alarmed her; she requested permission to send for Ellen, but Mrs. Irwyn always answered, "No,

let Ellen enjoy herself now, she cannot do so long." In a few days she declared herself better, scarcely complained of any thing, and exerted herself more than usual; but still she evidently declined, would take no food, and became extremely restless. Mrs. Morris, alarmed by this account from Russell, at length persuaded Mrs. Irwyn to see Mr. Hervey, whose opinion did but strengthen their anxiety. The following day, however, she became so much worse that Mr. Hervey begged to have the advice of a physician, who immediately on seeing his patient, declared her to be in imminent danger. An express was without delay sent off to Ellen, the result of which has been already related. One was also forwarded to Mr. Seymour, whom Russell had mentioned as the most intimate friend of the family, entreating him to come without delay to Hereford; as in case of Mrs. Irwyn's death, no one could give directions respecting her affairs, and what was to become of Ellen? Such an appeal was never made in vain to the benevolent heart of Mr. Seymour; he left Llanvair immediately, and arrived two days previously to Mrs. Irwyn's death. He found her in a most distressing state, lingering under the fear of death, which preyed continually on her mind. She

felt, that having lived without a Christian's faith, she dared not cling to the Christian's hope; and in that dark and dreadful hour, the "valley of death" lay before her, in all its gloomy terrors, without one beam of hope to dissipate the fearful clouds of horror and dismay! She could not, however, have been consigned to a more able and judicious friend than Mr. Seymour: firm in all the duties of a minister, he gently soothed her mind, while he earnestly endeavoured to lead her to the sinner's friend. Pleased by his attention in coming, she expressed herself grateful for his anxiety in her welfare. She seemed, however, scarcely pained by the absence of Ellen, and only twice mentioned her name, once to ask when she was expected, and then to request that Mr. Seymour would befriend her. In moments of delirium, she wildly implored forgiveness, and spoke of her doubts respecting the world to come in awful exclamations; but at other times she listened patiently to the mild and holy persuasions of Mr. Seymour, sincerely joined in his prayers, and after receiving the sacrament, a few hours before the arrival of her child, she sunk into the unconscious lethargy of expiring nature.

Mr. Seymour had already heard the cause

of Ellen's delay, as Louis had written to him before he left the Hermitage, telling him all that had passed, and entreating that he would palliate the conduct of Ellen to her mother, as much as possible, though it must for ever prevent further communication between her family and himself. He had heard of Mrs. Irwyn's illness through an officer, who had dined at Chilwood the day preceding the dance. Concluding, therefore, that Ellen would have left Lymington, Louis hastened to Dr. Herbert's, that he might learn all the particulars respecting her; but when he found that she was still at Lady Selfiston's, and that Dr. Herbert knew nothing of Mrs. Irwyn's illness, he supposed the report was altogether false, and therefore consented to accompany him to Chilwood, although little disposed to mix in so gay a scene. His surprise on finding Ellen as Aurora has been already related, and the report of Mrs. Irwyn's situation was fully corroborated in a letter from Russell to the servant, received that night, entreating her to accompany her young mistress without delay, and mentioning also that Mr. Seymour had been sent for, and was hourly expected. On hearing this, Louis was convinced that all his hopes of Ellen were at an end; he there-

fore wrote immediately to her, and leaving the Hermitage he proceeded direct to Portsmouth, where he embarked in the earliest packet for the Continent.

Mr. Seymour had intended that Ellen should proceed without delay to Llanvair, as her remaining at Hereford was unnecessary, and would only prolong her suffering; but when he found that she was too ill to be removed, he wrote to Fanny, requesting she would immediately join them, as she might afford comfort to her unhappy friend. This he mentioned to Ellen, supposing that it would give her pleasure; but nothing could exceed the violence of her temper on hearing it; she declared herself unworthy to see Fanny—that she would die rather than submit to the shame of meeting her, and that she never would go again to Llanvair.”

“And where then will you go?” said Mr. Seymour, endeavouring to persuade, rather than oppose; “where will you find a home so congenial to a sick mind, or friends so desirous of restoring peace to you as at Llanvair?”

“Oh! I know,” replied Ellen, “that I have no home, but I will go to Lady Selliston; she wishes to have me, and I am fit only to be with her; and then, when my heart is more

chastened, I will return to the happiness and peace of Llanvair."

"My poor Ellen," mildly replied Mr. Seymour, "and is it in the midst of a dissipated world that you are likely to find a balm to heal the wound which it has already left? Will gaiety bestow the peace you seek?"

"Gaiety!" exclaimed Ellen, "do you suppose that such as I can ever again be gay? No; but it will be a fit punishment to live in the midst of that which I abhor."

"So you would finish the draught, the taste of which has so nearly poisoned you! Ellen, believe me, the penance of self-inflicted punishment can avail you nothing; leave it to the will of Him whom you have offended, and submit with grateful resignation to bear whatever He may decree."

"Well then, I will go and live in some lone place, where, sequestered from the world, and all I love, I may expiate my past offences, a solitary unknown being."

"And where then will you find the means of doing so?" said Mr. Seymour, smiling; "strangers will not feed and clothe you, and yet you cannot starve."

"That which supported my poor mother, will more than supply me," replied Ellen.

"Your mother's affairs are left in so unsettled a state," said Mr. Seymour, patiently endeavouring to reason with the self-willed girl, "that a very small provision is all that you can now depend on, but it will be amply sufficient to answer all your claims, if you be not too proud to accept a home at St. Llenard's."

"Never will I be supported," replied Ellen, haughtily, "by those whom in my prosperity I neglected. I will go to Lady Selliston, and be her companion—her servant—any thing but a dependent."

Vainly did Mr. Seymour endeavour to argue against such reasoning, and as easily might he have calmed the ocean as Ellen's proud spirit. He felt assured, however, that Lady Selliston would not receive a child of affliction; but he wrote, in compliance with Ellen's request, to ask if she might join her in town for a short time. To which, in the course of a few days, he received the following reply.

"Dear Sir,

"I am indeed truly grieved to hear of the melancholy situation in which my interesting little Ellen is now left, and would not have delayed so long replying to your obliging

letter, had not private afflictions rendered me incapable of attending to any matters of business. I am much flattered by the preference Ellen gives to my home, and she knows me too well to doubt of my cordially receiving her, did not present circumstances compel me altogether to decline her kind offer of passing a few months with me: I therefore presume to advise her going to Llanvair, until she can meet with some situation less dependent, which I will endeavour to procure her amongst my friends in town, should she wish to accept one. Pray tell her this, and say that I should write to her, but my spirits are really unequal, at present, to offer condolence on so distressing an event.

“ A dreadful calamity has completely upset us all, in which I know dear Ellen will sincerely sympathise. The report may perhaps have reached you, that Miss Herbert was shortly to be married to the young Marquis of Clonnard; an alliance, of course, to which we looked forward with the utmost satisfaction: but judge of our consternation on finding, a few mornings since, that she had actually eloped with that puppy George Melford, whom, on enquiry, we find to be only the son of a rich *grocer*! You may suppose the grief which

this wretched girl has occasioned her afflicted parents; indeed, my poor brother is quite overwhelmed, and Mrs. Herbert has been delirious ever since. As to myself, I can neither eat nor sleep, so affected am I by the disgrace of such an alliance, and the ingratitude of that girl, with whom I had taken such unbounded pains, and lavished so much expense, that she might be fitted for that sphere of life, to which her beauty and descent entitled her. I do not, therefore, intend returning to town, but shall go to Paris as soon as my spirits will bear the fatigue of travelling, and pass a few years on the Continent; for I really cannot support the constant ennui of Dr. and Mrs. Herbert's endless wailings.

"Thus will dear Ellen see the distressing necessity of my resigning the pleasure of seeing her; but assured that she will meet with every kindness at Llanvair, I am quite happy in knowing her under the protection of such kind friends. I beg to add my love and best wishes to the sweet little mourner, and respectfully remain,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

"CAROLINE SELLISTON."

Mr. Seymour had not anticipated much kindness from Lady Selliston, but he could not have believed any one capable of writing so heartless a rejection of an appeal calculated at least to excite feelings of deep compassion. However, as he thought it useless to disguise it from Ellen, he gave her the letter, merely preparing her for its contents, by saying, "The world, you will see, my dear Ellen, wears a mask to please us in days of prosperity, but it flies off at the touch of affliction, and they who once flattered soon desert us, to learn too late the hypocrisy with which we have been ensnared."

Ellen flushed with angry pride as she perused the unexpected refusal, and returning it indignantly to Mr. Seymour, she exclaimed, "Lady Selliston's opinion of my Llanvair friends has somewhat changed, since she persuaded my poor mother that they would only make me a melancholy methodist! but I shall take care never again to intrude either myself or my sorrows on her attention." Then, after a few minutes' silence, she added with a deep sigh, "Poor Caroline, no wonder that *she* has fallen, for she had no friend to guide, and every temptation to betray her. Oh! Mr. Seymour, experience is indeed a hard lesson, when

taught by the treachery of the world. I loved Lady Selliston as my kindest, dearest friend; but ah! how deceitful, how fatal has been her friendship. It has robbed me of a mother's last blessing, the affection of Louis, the esteem of all my best friends, and above all, my peace of mind! Yet I dare not reproach her, since it was my own weakness that, in yielding to her influence, betrayed me to this endless misery: but to be now deserted by that very woman, for whom I left duty and every happiness, is more than I can bear. Oh, how can human beings thus trifle with each other's peace!"

"It is thus, Ellen," replied Mr. Seymour, "that even in afflictive dispensations, the goodness of the Almighty towards us is manifestly portrayed. Placed in a world which we have made one of sin, we have yet the means of salvation to guide us in a path of safety. Disregardful of the warning, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand'—'My Spirit shall not always strive with man,' we still rebel against the power of God, and cling to the venom of which we have been warned. God in his mercy, therefore, unwilling that any should be lost, leaves the sting of sin to wound the hand which sought it, that, subdued

by its anguish, we might learn to hate it, and be compelled to seek that fountain whose streams are powerful to heal; assured that He from whom it springs will in no wise cast the leper from Him. Ellen, long did the voice of a patient God vouchsafe to call you to repentance and peace; but you rejected the appeal, and now the sword of love has fallen in pity, not in anger, to destroy the guilt which you cherished, ere it consumed your soul. Make it not then a sword of fire by rebelling against his justice. Humbly bend to its stroke, and return to the Lord your God, for he will have mercy and abundantly pardon you; begin a new life, since his grace now offers to renew your heart; and then, my dear Ellen, this day of suffering may for ever be remembered with gratitude, as the first of your conversion."

"Oh! but I am too sinful to deserve such mercy," said Ellen mournfully, "God is not to be so mocked; for how often have I promised to become better, but am now more sinful than ever. Yet of myself I can do nothing that is right."

"And that, Ellen, is the most powerful appeal you could offer for the assistance of divine grace. Hitherto you have trusted in your own strength, have relied on the suffi-

ciency of your own righteousness. It was in that your heart so fatally deceived you. We can indeed do nothing well-pleasing to Him, who is too pure to behold iniquity; another spirit then must dwell within us, ere righteousness can take root in our souls. Do you not remember the words which you have read with me from Bishop Horne, that 'the power of Christ will be manifested in all, by the destruction either of sin, or of the sinner. The hearts which now yield to the impressions of His Spirit, are broken only in order to be formed anew, and to become vessels of honor, fitted for the Master's use. Those only, which continue stubborn and hardened, must be dashed in pieces by the stroke of eternal vengeance.' Thus, since Christ himself vouchsafes to watch over and subdue our rebellious hearts; oh! Ellen, turn in humble penitence to the fold from which you have so perversely strayed; that, like a lost sheep regained by the saving mercy of your shepherd, you may at last hear the hallelujahs of joy pronounced even over *you*, glorifying the power of Him, who is mighty to save, merciful to spare. We have only to fall, helpless in ourselves, at the cross of our Redeemer, and the strength of Jehovah shall bear us up; His powerful

hand shall break the chain of our guilt, and, renewed by His grace, we shall become in Him the free partakers of pardon and of eternal life."

"Oh! Mr. Seymour," exclaimed Ellen, softened by this encouragement, "had I not left Llanvair, this day of sorrow would never have been mine; but I must not go there again, I could not meet those friends whom I have so long neglected, whose friendship I have so wilfully cast away. No, no: they would not, could not see me, so disgraced: justly deserted by them all, oh! what will become of me, homeless orphan that I am?"

Here she burst into tears; and Mr. Seymour, gently taking her hand, replied, "Would you then, Ellen, because you have hitherto perverted them, refuse the blessings which God, in his mercy, has not only spared to you, but now again *offers* for your comfort, and thus provoke Him, who has bestowed them, to leave you destitute? Humbled under the chastisement of God, rather accept the means which His wisdom shall see fit to appoint for your future welfare. Take your Bible, it will teach you more than my precepts can do; and there you will find every promise of support and consolation, for those who take 'refuge in

the Lord.' This evening Fanny will be here, and she, I trust, will supply a sister's place. Do not therefore suppose you are deserted by any of us, for Heaven forbid that we, who are alike so frail, should reject the penitent, whom God vouchsafes to receive. Put your trust then wholly in Him, and while I live, if it be His will, I will be a father to you."

Touched by this undeserved kindness, Ellen became more composed, and after a few minutes' silence, asked when the funeral of her mother was to take place.

"To-morrow," replied Mr. Seymour, "we pay the last tribute to her remains. It will be a day of trial to you, let it be one too of self-abasement. Offer the sacrifices of a broken spirit, and a contrite heart; and then I hope, my dear Ellen, that every spark of pride will be extinguished, and that you will be prepared to accompany me to a home which awaits you with every earthly blessing, where you shall be at liberty to follow your own pursuits without interference, and at Llanvair you may find much to renovate your mind, and restore tranquillity to your wounded heart."

Ellen offered no resistance. She sobbed violently, but it was more in sorrow than with passion; and Mr. Seymour, glad to encourage

any token of submission, continued patiently to urge all that could excite it. Seeing her more composed, he advised her, as she was still very weak, to lie down and try to sleep, that she might be better able to meet Fanny on her arrival; and then leaving her to the care of Russell, he went to arrange the preparations for the funeral.

The coach came and brought—not Fanny, but Miss Aubrey. On hearing the summons from Mr. Seymour, she had kindly offered to take the office assigned to Fanny; as, being a more experienced traveller, she might be of more essential assistance, in case she could persuade Ellen to proceed at once to Llanvair. Her being with her would then leave Mr. Seymour more at liberty to remain at Hereford, to settle, with greater comfort to himself, what remained of Mrs. Irwyn's affairs; and although assured that Fanny would not shrink from any affliction, if required to meet it, yet she was glad to spare her young heart the pain to which her own was but too well accustomed.

Mr. Seymour received her with grateful pleasure, as he guessed the motives which had led her to Hereford; and after telling her what had passed, he went to prepare Ellen for the meeting of her friend. He found, how-

ever, that she had been extremely restless for some time, and though she now appeared more quiet, she was still insensible to every thing around her. Mr. Seymour thought that the sight of Miss Aubrey might perhaps rouse her attention, and therefore requested her to appear; but Ellen evinced no signs either of surprise or pleasure. Mr. Hervey was immediately sent for, but he assured them there was no symptom to create alarm, the attack being merely the effects of extreme exhaustion, which sleep would soon remove; but he requested that she might be kept perfectly quiet, and be diverted as much as possible from painful associations. Miss Aubrey insisted on passing the night by her young friend, and seemed to forget the fatigues of a long journey, in the wish of contributing to the comfort of another. She therefore took her station by the bed-side of Ellen, and administered the medicine to her, according to the directions given, till she gradually fell into a deep sleep. This lasted a considerable time, when at length waking she called for some drink. Miss Aubrey took the cup from Russell, which Ellen perceiving, she faintly asked "who was there?"

"It is I, my dear Ellen," replied Miss

Aubrey, affectionately taking her hand, "I am come to nurse you, and as a sister to watch over you. Drink this," added she, smiling, "it will do you good, and I long to see you better."

Ellen looked steadily at her for some moments, as if she had only a confused remembrance of what she saw, then bursting into tears she said, "Oh, I remember all now, but why are you here, dear Miss Aubrey? I deserve no kindness from you."

"We will both forget the past," said Miss Aubrey cheerfully, "and now only think of present blessings, for I am very thankful to see you better."

"How can I be a cause of thankfulness to any one," said Ellen, with a faint smile; "surely you cannot love me now!"

"Indeed Ellen I love you tenderly," replied Miss Aubrey, "and I hope we shall always continue friends; but you must sleep now, and talk to me to-morrow."

"Oh!" exclaimed Ellen, "what a difference is there between real and pretended friendship, between the people of God and those of the world. When I was gay and happy, I had friends who flattered and caressed me; but where are they now? while those whom I then

neglected, whose counsels I despised, visit me in my affliction, yet spare me from reproach. Oh! Miss Aubrey, how ill I have requited your kindness; and yet you come to soothe these sad, sad hours of sickness and distress."

"Striking indeed, Ellen," replied Miss Aubrey, "is the goodness of the Almighty towards you; and while you thus experience His mercy, fail not to put your trust in Him, and then He will never leave you destitute. You have many friends, my Ellen, and we long to see you amongst us again, restored to health and cheerfulness."

"God is indeed most merciful to me," said Ellen, "nor can I be too thankful for all these blessings; and yet, Miss Aubrey, I dare not now say that I will love righteousness and better fulfil my duty; for I can do nothing of myself; but earnestly do I desire to be so sanctified that God may dwell within my heart."

"If such be your prayer, it will not be offered in vain," replied Miss Aubrey, "for remember that God willeth not that any should be lost; but such as draw near to Him, He will in no wise cast out. And if by sorrow the heart is made better, surely, dear Ellen, we

ought cheerfully to bear it, under the hope that it may be so blessed to us."

"Yes," exclaimed Ellen, her countenance brightening as she spoke, "I know that I have every encouragement to be patient; but I fear I have behaved very ill, and given a great deal of trouble to Mr. Seymour by my want of resignation, and by the pride which so ungratefully rebelled against his kindness. I do not wonder that dear Fanny will not come here, to bear with such ungoverned feelings, nor surprised that she is averse to meet one so unlike herself."

"Indeed, Ellen," replied Miss Aubrey, "you are mistaken if you think that any such feelings prevented her coming. She longed to be with you from the moment she heard of your being ill; and had you witnessed the contest between us, you would have known how desirous we both were of claiming the precedence as your nurse. She argued her earlier intimacy as giving her a prior right, but as I soon proved that we were equal in our affection towards you, age gave me the advantage, and I came off as you see, triumphant! but to make up for her disappointment, I promised that I would take you to her

as soon as possible. Nor is Lady Warton less anxious to see you, for she will not hear of Mr. Seymour's adopting you while she lives to want a daughter, such as she longs to claim in you; therefore she insists on his yielding, in this instance, his own wishes to hers, and begs that you will only think of Llanvair Hall as your future home."

Ellen smiled, and tears of gratitude glistened in her eyes, as she confessed the unmerited kindness of all her friends. "I hope I shall be able to go there very soon, for I long to leave Hereford, which, after to-morrow," added she with some emotion, "will contain nothing to bind me to a scene of such painful associations."

Miss Aubrey read her thoughts, and immediately changing the subject, endeavoured to divert her mind in cheerful conversation, and then persuaded her to compose herself to rest. To this she consented, conditionally that Miss Aubrey would leave her to the care of Russell, and also lie down for some hours. Having prayed by her, Miss Aubrey left her, and Ellen soon fell into a sweet sleep, her mind restored to calmness and to peace.

The next morning, at an early hour, Mr. Seymour followed to the grave the last remains

of Mrs. Irwyn. He was in hopes that they might have been removed from the house unknown to Ellen, and would not therefore disturb her, fearful of awakening her suspicion. But Miss Aubrey, who sat with her, observed that the mournful hustle was not disregarded ; and when she heard the tolling bell, which summoned the melancholy cavalcade to render "dust to dust," Ellen sank on the bosom of her friend and wept bitterly for some time. On his return, Mr. Seymour came to her, and rejoiced to find so great an alteration in her mind. She received him with composure, and thanked him for his kindness to her poor mother and herself. When he had again left her, she desired Russell to bring her mourning, and being drest she accompanied Miss Aubrey to the sitting-room. She was pale and languid, but appeared resigned, and even expressed a wish of leaving Hereford, if possible, on the following morning. Mr. Seymour rejoiced in such a request, and therefore advanced no objection ; and Miss Aubrey taking on herself the necessary arrangements, the remainder of the day passed more cheerfully than could have been expected ; for though Ellen scarcely spoke, yet she seemed to take an interest in the conversation of her friends.

Mr. Seymour insisted on her retiring early for the night, that she might be better enabled to meet the fatigues of the ensuing day, and was about to bid her good night, when, with some hesitation, she requested leave to speak to him for half an hour, if she might sit up for that time. Hearing this, Miss Aubrey said, that she would go and finish packing, but Ellen taking her hand replied, "Not on my account, dear Miss Aubrey, since from you I can have no concealments, and I am sure that now you will not be surprised to hear of any thing disgraceful to me." Miss Aubrey felt gratified by this mark of confidence; but too delicate to avail herself of it, she left the room on the plea of being anxious to complete her preparations.

Ellen blushed as Mr. Seymour bade her command his services; then, after a few minutes' silence, she said, "I believe that you correspond with Louis de Rancy, have you lately heard from him?"

"I have," replied Mr. Seymour, "and therefore already know what has passed between you; but I trust all may yet be remedied."

"Never;" exclaimed Ellen, interrupting him in a decisive tone; "I could not ask it: but so far as he is in error, in justice to myself


I wish him undeceived, beyond that, I dare not require." She then gave Mr. Seymour the last letter received from Louis, and explained every circumstance relative to the dance. He was shocked to find the cruelly selfish concealment with which Lady Selliston had deceived her, but was equally relieved on hearing so much of Ellen's conduct thus justified from the suspicions which had so strongly appeared against her. He bade her be comforted, adding, "that as the rest was committed in weakness, not in depravity of heart, he hoped that all might yet be rectified."

"The dress of Aurora," replied Ellen calmly, "cannot be so easily justified—the disgust excited by such a display, cannot be so remedied!—No, Mr. Seymour; Ellen left her sick mother, for a sickening world—left her duty for dissipation. That mother is now removed to a better care than mine, and in the pleasure for which I so fatally left the path of duty, I have justly met the penalty of my disobedience. Seek not, therefore, to palliate these to one, who though indeed he might forgive—could never forget them. For the rest, justify me so far as truth will permit it, that I may yet live in his esteem though lost to his affection; and while he must con-

demn, he may still remember me with pity. Say this from me—but tell him that in wishing his remembrance, I only ask it in his prayers.”

Mr. Seymour promised to write immediately, and adhere most strictly to her injunctions. He saw, indeed, that Louis was seriously pained, and could not but justify the path which he had pursued; he would not, therefore, offer any hope of a reconciliation, though inwardly he believed that it would be effected, under the evidence that Ellen had been more weak than wicked, deceived by the levity of others as much as injured by her own. He then entreated her to go to bed, and feeling relieved by what had passed, she soon composed herself to rest.

The next morning, Miss Aubrey, with her young charge and Russell, left Hereford. Mr. Seymour parted with Ellen, repeating the warmest assurances of continued kindness; and promised, if possible, to return home on the following Saturday.



CHAP. V.

ABOUT two years subsequent to the departure of Louis from England, General de Rancy died, leaving his son the sole heir of his possessions. Pleased with the ingenuous frankness with which Louis had communicated his disappointment respecting Ellen, and the disinterested prudence with which he had yielded his own wishes to a sense of duty, General de Rancy confessed, that the most unlimited confidence was at least due to him, and therefore no longer restricted him to the injunctions of a Swiss alliance.

To Louis, however, life had lost the charms with which a lively imagination had gilded it. He could not forget Ellen ; but while he pitied her weakness, he endeavoured to check every remembrance associated with his former attachment. From Mr. Seymour he had heard of her penitence, and the afflictions which had subdued her to feel it ; but he firmly adhered

to his determination of seeing her no more : and though he sincerely prayed for her as if her future happiness must still form a part of his own, he would allow no further interest to mingle in his feelings towards her. Study and military duties now filled the vacuum which disappointment had made in his life and prospects, and in the labors of science he gradually lost that extreme of romance which in painting an ideal world, had left its realities, if not neglected, heavy and uninteresting.

The veil which so long had concealed the common cares of life, was removed by the experience of their trials ; and the future now lay before him, unadorned by those embellishments of fancy, in which an enthusiastic mind loves to revel. It was about this time, that his regiment was re-called to England and stationed in the Isle of Wight. There every neighbouring hill and distant perspective again painfully awakened remembrances of the past with which they were connected ; but, while taught by their moral the fallacy of hopes reared only on the foundation of earthly ties, his heart did but draw more closely to those which sorrow can never destroy. He was not long in seeking an introduction to Mr. St. Williams, of whose family he had heard enough.

to excite a wish of intimacy, and with them he found that society calculated to please a mind seeking the solid pleasures of Christianity. He therefore became a frequent guest at Niton Grove, and was never omitted from their circle, whenever any little excursion was proposed as a day of amusement for the young people.

Lyna Stanhope was still a member of that happy family, and enjoyed, even in the arduous duties of her situation, all the privileges attached to a home.

The remembrance of Lady Catherine Foster would indeed often excite a regret that the mystery of their separation had never yet been developed. Yet in such regrets discontent in her present blessings had no part, for truly did she value the home and friends which now surrounded her; although she could never think of her former benefactress without a pang, that she who had once been the dearest to her, loved her no more under the suspicion of her ingratitude.

Years since then had indeed rolled on, and time may reconcile the injured to their injuries, may change the human, like the vegetative creation, from the gloom of winter to the brightness of summer, and far away with its

wings the chaff of earthly cares, from the solid fruits of experience which the vicissitudes of life leave mingled on the moral world ! but it can never annihilate the remembrance of childhood—that happy season, when the buoyancy of a light heart, unchecked by care, magnifies every enjoyment so far beyond its reality. The power of possessing happiness may indeed remain the same, and the events of life change only in the estimate with which we value them. In age, as in youth, sorrow and joy may still bear their equal proportion, and each day bring its appointed measure of both !—but as time brings the experience of the one, it is in the retrospections of youth only, that the other can be remembered as unmixed with painful associations. Thus it was when Lyna, surrounded by every intrinsic blessing, still looked back on those of Laylands, and sighed to think that they were lost to her for ever ! For while memory thus recalled them, the anguish connected with them was softened, and the sense of injury subdued. Long had she now ceased to hope for vindication of her wrongs, and a restoration to the affection of Lady Catherine on this side the grave ; but limited is the wisdom of the human mind in discerning the government of Omnipotence, who sees not as

we see, but whose decrees are guided by infinite love towards us, and often produce His purposes, by means weak in appearance, mighty in effect! Justice may be sometimes procrastinated in trial of our faith; but if in "evidence of things unseen," we patiently await the consummation of the divine will, we shall hereafter trace blessings in all that we called evil, and mercy in that which we, in our blindness, deemed afflictive!

One evening, when Mr. St. Williams, and his young people, had just returned from a sail to Shanklin chine, Louis, Miss St. Williams, and Lyna, lingered on the shore to watch the last decline of an October sun, and were moralizing on the glories of creation, when Mr. St. Williams, hastily returning to them, called Lyna, and in a tone of more than his usual seriousness, requested her to follow him, as a servant had been waiting some time to see her on some urgent communication. Alarmed by so unusual a summons, she silently obeyed, without venturing an enquiry as to the purport; till, on reaching the house, she caught sight of a person on horseback, bearing the livery of Lady Catherine Foster. She turned pale, and looked anxiously for explanation, when Mr. St. Williams led her into his study,

and with much kindness gave her a letter, which, as coming from Lady Catherine, he guessed might be painful to her. It was indeed one written by her desire, containing a most earnest request that Lyna would go to her without delay, as she was very ill, and wished to see her once more before her death.

Poor Lyna became extremely agitated, but was too happy in the hope of receiving the last blessing of her earliest friend to suffer a remembrance of the past to detain her from an immediate compliance; and after a hasty preparation she followed Mr. St. Williams to the little vessel waiting to conduct her from the Island. He insisted on accompanying her as far as Lymington, when he left her with all the anxiety of a parent, full of hope respecting the result of her errand; and having promised to write by the earliest post, Lyna took leave of her kind friend, and in a few hours was at the bed-side of Lady Catherine Foster.

She found too truly that the messenger had not exaggerated the situation of her Ladyship, who, supported by pillows, seemed as one patiently awaiting the relief which death alone can bring for the sufferings of expiring nature. The painful watchfulness with which she had listened to every sound in the expectation of

Lyna's return to her, together with the dread of being refused the only wish that now animated her, with a desire that life might be for a while prolonged, had produced such a degree of restlessness and fever, that those who attended her were not a little alarmed for the result.

When the moment of trial arrived, however, she evinced less of agitation than of deep and silent feeling. Strengthened by a momentary energy, she raised herself as she heard the well-remembered voice of Lyna; and after fixing a short but steady gaze on her countenance, as if to read whether affection could still exist, she exclaimed, "Lyna!—my child!" and then pressed her fondly to her bosom, unable further to express the feelings with which her heart was agonized. Both remained for some time locked in each other's arms, till the deep sobs of Lyna recalled them to mutual forbearance and exertion. Ellis, as soon as she saw them in some degree composed, endeavoured to dissuade her mistress from dwelling further on a subject which must excite so much emotion; but Lady Catherine would not hear of Lyna's leaving the room until she had explained the mystery by which both had so severely suffered. Then, turning

to Lyna with an imploring look, she added, "Do not deprive me of an hour which may be the last granted to me for earthly communications; for remember, I am now only waiting the summons of death; and you have, my poor deserted girl, much to hear—much to forgive."

"Never deserted," exclaimed Lyna, "since I am spared to such an hour as this! but let us not think of the past—the future may yet be fraught with many unlooked-for mercies."

"Yes, my Lyna," said Lady Catherine calmly, "but time and blessings which have been neglected, cannot be so remedied. I, in their possession, became self-willed, and proudly trusting to my own weak judgment, wronged an orphan, relying blindly on appearances; and now the means of restitution are no longer mine. A blessing, Lyna, is all that I can give you."

"And that," replied Lyna, "is all that I would ask, the restitution which I shall best value. Forgiven and forgiving, let us then, my best of friends, forget our mutual injuries, which are more than repaid in this moment of kindness."

Lady Catherine raised her eyes to heaven, as inwardly she praised God for having thus

spared her life to see the innocence of one whom she had so dearly loved, and taking the hand of Lyna, said with evident feeling, "I have long left you, my poor child, exposed to the trials of a hard world, and yet you come to me the same affectionate girl as when my home was your's. Oh! Lyna, if the justice of the Almighty were less infinite, that we by Him were judged as we on earth condemn each other! what would be our portion? but limited indeed are we in our knowledge of another's heart.

Here Lady Catherine became exhausted, and Lyna would fain have persuaded her to rest; but to this she would not accede, until she had related all the circumstances which had occurred since her illness, in which the hypocrisy of Mrs. Grentham had been completely exposed. Having done this, she at length consented to compose herself for the night, on condition that Lyna would also go to bed.

Charity has thrown a veil over the early life of Mrs. Grentham, and prejudice must not here attempt to raise it! We will not therefore detail the many follies which marked her youth, and singled her as an example of the danger of yielding to the passions of the human

heart, which, unchecked by a sense of an Almighty presence, and of future denunciations, rebel against every principle of duty, and finally leave us to all the miseries of remorse. If the evil of a neglected education can palliate the offences to which it leads, such may be offered in behalf of Mrs. Grentham. She was the only child of parents, who thought beauty a sufficient advantage for a girl; and as she possessed this to their hearts' content, every thing else was neglected, so that with a naturally designing and malicious disposition, the pretty Miss Georgiana grew up an adept in all the artifices of a coquette. Her unfeeling conduct towards her parents sufficiently proved to them the sophistry of those principles in which they had reared her, and soon brought their "grey hairs with sorrow to the grave;" and after ten years' union with a husband, whom she had married only for connexion, she was left a widow, with a sufficient income to indulge in the caprices of an extravagant and ungoverned mind.

It was then that she was introduced to Lady Catherine Foster, with whom some relationship was traced to the Grentham family, and consequently she thought it might be a politic scheme to win the favor of her wealthy relative.

The result of their acquaintance may be remembered by our readers; it would therefore be useless to detail the many deep-concerted inventions employed to obtain such an ascendancy over the mind of Lady Catherine, as might eventually assist her ambitious views. The power of her fascination and pretended affection, had done much in promoting her interests; but as she saw that in Lyna she had a powerful rival, she determined to effect her removal. This, as has been seen, was done, and Mrs. Grentham then believed herself secure of every advantage; but as is generally the case where evil is designed, however triumphant it may for a time appear, in striving to undermine the cause of another, she weakened her own, and by her continued efforts to prejudice Lady Catherine against her former favorite, she at length excited a degree of suspicion as to the motives of such unprovoked insinuations against one, who as being wholly discarded, ought rather to have been safe from further animadversion. Mrs. Grentham overacted her part also, in her professions towards Lady Catherine, who, though blindly partial, would still often turn away disgusted by the flattery which was so lavishly bestowed. Mrs. Grentham became more and

more frequently a guest at Laylands; for although she could ill bear the restraint of its monotonous retirement, or the little peculiarities of old age, yet she was willing to sacrifice a few months in the year under the hope of eventually receiving so ample a compensation.

It was in one of these visits that Lady Catherine was seized with an inflammation on the chest, which so soon reduced her, that a rapid decline was apprehended. In illness, while dependent on those who surround us for those temporal comforts, which kindness can so easily bestow, gratitude is soon excited, and every little attention opens the heart to receive the tenderest impressions towards our fellow creatures. Of these, no one could be more susceptible than Lady Catherine; though a stranger to the feelings of disinterested gratitude, Mrs. Grentham sufficiently understood their theory to avail herself of them where she found an opportunity to make them subservient to her own purposes. For this she now confined herself to the sick-room of Lady Catherine, endeavouring to administer such comforts as she deemed most desirable for an invalid. Her Ladyship was not insensible to this devotion, and in a moment of gratitude, believing that she had now little time remaining

for earthly interests, she made her will in favor of Mrs. Grentham, to whom, with the exception of a few annuities, she left the sole disposal of her property. Ellis, who became somewhat tenacious of Mrs. Grentham's interference in what she considered was her own department, and saw with a jealous eye the unbounded influence she had now acquired over her mistress, began to complain to Lady Catherine, that she was rather more officious in the domestic concerns of Laylands than was necessary, and often hinted that Mrs. Grentham was not so "*over-polite* for nothing," nor yet closeted with Miss Herald an hour every day, "*nobody knew why*," without some design, at present mysterious. Lady Catherine, however, possessed too much good sense to heed such insinuations, believing them to be produced only by the jealousy of her faithful servant, until one morning that Ellis entered the room with a countenance of some importance, and having closed the door, related to her mistress a conversation which she had very undesignedly heard between Mrs. Grentham and Miss Herald. The purport of this was, an evident anxiety on the part of the former, to conceal from Lady Catherine certain circumstances which she seemed appre-

hensive might be developed, and which would betray her own manœuvring respecting Lyna, but which with the assistance of Miss Herald, and a little caution on both sides, might still be concealed at all events until after the death of her Ladyship. In this Ellis had gathered sufficient information to be convinced that some design had been practised in the affair of Miss Stanhope, of which Mrs. Grentham was the inventor, and therefore she did not hesitate in charging her with such duplicity most boldly to her mistress.

Poor Lady Catherine heard all this with mingled feelings of pain, surprise, and horror! She knew Ellis too well to doubt her veracity; but still she endeavoured to hope that some misunderstanding must have arisen in having only partially heard the circumstances, and therefore desired Ellis not to repeat her suspicions to any other person, but to leave the result entirely to her own judgment.

Left to herself, Lady Catherine carefully endeavoured to recall the particulars of that unhappy event which had given her so much pain, and in comparing former with later circumstances, she was enabled to trace many inconsistencies in the conduct of Mrs. Grentham where Lyna was concerned, which

hitherto had passed unnoticed. She therefore now determined to mention the subject without insinuating any suspicions, to Mrs. Grentham, to see how far she could stand the test of such a trial. Accordingly, when they were alone that evening, endeavouring to compose herself, she gradually led to the conversation, and fixing her eyes for some minutes steadily on the countenance of Mrs. Grentham, she said, "Georgiana, I wish to see Lyna Stanhope; for although she has forfeited my esteem, and can therefore merit no further patronage from one whose kindness she so ungratefully requited, yet, if possible, a christian should die in peace with all mankind, and perhaps a death-bed forgiveness may be the means of exciting her to penitence, and awakening serious reflections, which may be eventually blessed to her."

During this speech Mrs. Grentham could not conceal the emotions of a guilty conscience; she became extremely agitated, but at length, endeavouring to command herself, she used her utmost efforts to dissuade her Ladyship from such a step. "I am sure," added she, "that Miss Stanhope ill deserves such kindness from you, nor indeed would she appreciate your motives in offering your forgiveness,

and the world would only construe it as a tacit confession on your part of conscious injury towards her, at least she would take care to make it appear so, for I know her to be a most hardened hypocrite."

"If she *is* so," calmly replied her Ladyship, "it the more behoves me to use the last privileges of life, in exhorting the unhappy girl, who was once my tenderest care, to seek ere it be too late, not mine, but the favor of her God, and the intercession of a Saviour, from whom perhaps she lives an alien! Impressed with the awfulness of death, would not the most hardened be touched by such an appeal to dread its tremendous issue?"

"It is indeed most generous in you, my dear Lady Catherine," exclaimed Mrs. Grentham, endeavouring to assume composure, "thus to desire another's welfare even at the expense of your own suffering; but surely your recovery ought to be the first consideration, and I cannot but dread the result of any excitation, as nothing but extreme quietness is likely to restore you. Therefore, let me entreat you most earnestly, for the sake of all those who love you, to keep your mind free from all anxiety."

"To do so," replied Lady Catherine, "my

mind must first be relieved of whatever militates against its comfort. It is therefore my wish, nay, my desire, that Miss Stanhope may be sent for, that the choice of seeing me may at least be left to her own feelings, and how far mine are equal to the trial, surely I must be the best judge."

This was said in a tone of decision, which Mrs. Grentham knew was, as coming from Lady Catherine, most unalterably firm; and too much agitated in herself to make any further resistance, she left the room, and going to her own, gave free vent to her passion in a burst of tears.

The next morning, after planning a thousand schemes, none of which were likely to succeed in preventing Lady Catherine's purpose, Mrs. Grentham resolved that she would not remain to meet the object of her resentment, but would leave Miss Herald as her agent in counteracting, if possible, the mischief which Lyna might effect; for though the will was already in her own possession, she knew that while life remained, another might easily be substituted. With these determinations she entered the sick-room, and declared, that although it would grieve her to be absent from Laylands at such a moment, she thought, under the

circumstance of another's coming, she had better leave it for a few days, as so many being in the house would only create bustle, and be very inconvenient; therefore to prove herself disinterested, she would resign her own gratification for that of others.

Lady Catherine, who had now seen enough of Mrs. Grentham to understand the real motives of such a proposal, replied with some indifference, that if the presence of Miss Stanhope could be in the least painful to her, she would certainly not press her remaining to meet it: and therefore begged Mrs. Grentham would use the carriage that day to convey her wherever she wished, as in consequence of such an objection, Miss Stanhope need not be sent for until the following morning.

Mrs. Grentham, full of rage and mortification, at a loss to conceive what had wrought so unexpected a change, evident not only in the wishes of Lady Catherine respecting Lyna, but in her manners towards herself, hastened to pour forth her griefs in the bosom of her friend Miss Herald, who endeavoured to persuade her that all might arise merely from some conscientious feeling in her Ladyship, and that doubtless Lyna would never think of returning to one who had so long deserted her. Comforted with this hope, Mrs. Grentham pre-

pared for her removal, and having taken a most affecting leave of Lady Catherine, with a thousand protestations of affection, her own heart suffering the miseries of fear, ambition, and conscious guilt, she drove from Laylands, as if the fate of empires rested on the result of her absence !

The ensuing morning Lady Catherine bade Ellis write to Lyna, and despatch a servant to Niton Grove, that she might as soon as possible be relieved from the anxiety with which she would await the issue of his errand. It was not long after this was done that Ellis brought to her mistress a slip of paper which had been found in Mrs. Grentham's room, probably dropped in the hurry of packing, and supposing it to be of no value, Ellis was about to throw it into the fire, when, as she said, curiosity led her to read its contents, which fully corroborated all that she had before reported of Mrs. Grentham's manœuvring. The paper was rather worn, and had evidently been written some years ago, previously to the departure of Lyna, containing a playful paragraph in the hand-writing of Mrs. Grentham, bearing her own and the initials of Miss Herald. Its purport was, "that in case of Lyna's removal from Laylands, and total banishment from the favor of Lady Catherine,

and the hopes of Mrs. Grentham in consequence being realised, Jane Herald was to receive a reward adequate to her assistance in the affair, and for life to share the advantages of such an event."

It would be needless to describe the mingled feelings of Lady Catherine on reading this developement of Mrs. Grentham's real character; nor need we repeat the meeting which followed between herself and Lyna. Mutual confidence and affection were soon restored, and Lady Catherine, convinced how much through misunderstanding she had wronged her young friend, was now only anxious to make every reparation in her power. At first she considered herself too much bound by promise and honor to retract the will made in behalf of Mrs. Grentham; but on the evidence of such premeditated guilt, she now considered herself perfectly justified in cancelling it. She therefore wrote to Mrs. Grentham, enclosing the piece of paper before alluded to, and declared her intention of making over to Miss Stanhope the whole of her property.

Her mind being thus relieved, Lady Catherine appeared so animated, and thought herself so much better, that all, excepting the experienced Ellis, who knew too well the brilliancy

which fever lends only to deceive, began to entertain sanguine hopes of her recovery. She would fain have completed the remaining task, which she said was far too important to be procrastinated ; but overcome by the earnest entreaties of the watchful Lyna, she was at length persuaded to leave the rest of her affairs until the following morning, being already fatigued by the exertions of the past day. But, alas ! death waits not the accomplishment of human designs ; for ere the coming of another morrow, it had for ever closed those hopes with which the last evening had been so bright. Scarcely had Lady Catherine been settled for the night, when she became exceedingly oppressed, and before the arrival of medical assistance, she peacefully expired in the arms of her faithful Lyna.

It would be only painful to relate the anguish of those left to mourn the loss of one, who as friend, mistress, and patroness, had been so justly endeared. We will therefore only add, that as Lady Catherine had lived respected, so she died universally regretted.

A despatch was immediately forwarded to Mrs. Grentham, without whom, as being left sole executrix, nothing could be settled. It reached her just as she was bitterly lamenting

over the contents of Lady Catherine's last letter, and the immediate transition from rage to malicious joy, on finding the wishes of the deceased had been thus so unexpectedly frustrated, bore sufficient evidence how insincere had been her profession of gratitude and affection towards Lady Catherine, and how little she now mourned the loss of a benefactress, from whose bounty she was about to possess every earthly comfort. She desired the messenger of these welcome tidings immediately to return to Laylands, that every thing might be prepared for her arrival there on the following morning, as she would herself preside over the funeral. She then sent to Miss Herald, desiring that she would join her without delay, and henceforth consider herself, according to their agreement, a resident of Laylands.

Poor Lyna waited not the coming of these new tenants. Having assisted the distressed Ellis in performing the last sad offices due to the remains of Lady Catherine, she prepared her mind for the trial of quitting for ever all that was associated with her happiest years. Once more she sought the chamber of death, and looking on the placid countenance of her, who seemed only to sleep on a bed of peace, she knelt down by her side, and imploring

present support, and the blessings of divine grace on her future life, she mingled with her tears the praises of a grateful heart for having been spared to receive the last benedictions of her dearest friend. She then took leave of Ellis, assuring her of continued kindness, should she ever stand in need of her assistance, and hastening from the room gave one last look as she drove from Laylands, and then covering her face with both her hands, looked up no more until she reached Lymington, where Mr. and Mrs. St. Williams waited to receive and accompany her in her return to Niton Grove.

Mrs. Grentham, who immediately added to her own the name of Foster, on her arrival at Laylands soon assumed all the prerogatives of possession. The funeral over, old servants and old furniture were alike discarded for new ones. Laylands became modernised by every art which fancy could design, and magnificent hatchments were placed in pompous parade of mourning, wherever they could be most conspicuous.

Now in the midst of all that ambition could have asked—surrounded by every luxury which fortune could command—the anxious hopes of many a long year fully realised—was Mrs. Grentham Foster happy? She surely thought,

that when possessed of wealth, power,—and of course *friends*,—she could scarcely have a wish ungratified ; but no sooner were they hers than she still felt the want of something more, which none of these could purchase. Friends indeed she had to court the favour of her smiles, but their professions gave her no pleasure, their flattery could not gratify, for she remembered what her own had been when another filled her place—and then felt herself desolate even in the midst of thousands ! Soon too, she became suspicious even of Miss Herald, yet bound to her by many a secret tie, she was forced to profess regard, nor dared she release herself from one whose presence became daily more hateful to her, as being only a mirror on which was reflected a dreadful register of past remembrances. She placed no confidence in the most trusty of her servants, for being a stranger to disinterested feelings, she knew not how another could possess them, so that at length she found in the charge of such an establishment only a burden, which even its advantages could scarcely lighten, and those very riches for which her heart had so long yearned, became a weight—heavier than she could bear. Mistrusting all around her, she could no longer

find a faithful servant to bear with her suspicious doubtings, nor could she claim one *sincere friend*, in all that throng of guests, who daily paid their tribute to her wealth and situation. Thus miserable in herself, she wondered what it was that made her so, surrounded by splendor and power. But these, alas! cannot stifle the whisperings of an accusing conscience, when, like a never-dying worm, it cankers the heart on which it feeds! they cannot gild the dark hours of night, with those bright beams of peace, which rest on the people of God! of a peace, so passing understanding, that without it a palace can afford no comforts; yet where it falls, a dungeon may contain a happy prisoner!

In the mean time Lyna, surrounded by every kindness, enjoyed a life of tranquillity; for the present was no longer embittered by painful remembrances of the past. Her most earnest wish had been gratified, and now, happy in the little independence which her labors supplied, she envied not more wealthy possessions.

"Such," said Mr. St. Williams one day to his children, who had been discussing the unexpected and extraordinary means by which Lyna had been thus justified from the stigma

which so long had hung over her, "Such is the wonderful and never-failing justice of God's government towards the humblest of his creatures. Too finite, indeed, is the limited comprehension of the human mind, immediately to understand the decrees of infinite wisdom; but never are the works of injustice left to triumph over truth, since time ever developes the mysteries of divine power, even to the narrow sight of man, who may often trace them through the medium of circumstances apparently so trifling in themselves, that in their end only can we estimate their importance."

Louis had been an attentive listener to the moral precepts of the good father. They opened to him a wide field for contemplation; and, inclined to enjoy the musings of a solitary ramble, he left his companions for a while, and strolled to a projecting cliff which overlooked the bay. There he stood meditating on what he had just heard, tracing the dispensations of providence in favor of his own mingled career, when the weak voice of a female, the tone of which was somewhat complaining, suddenly attracted his attention. He stooped forward to see from whence it came, and on the sands, beneath the shelter of the cliff, he

saw a lady in a low chaise, supported by pillows, evidently there for the benefit of the sea breeze. Several attendants were standing round her, some gathering weeds and others picking shells for her amusement, but none seemed successful in their endeavours to please the restless invalid. Such a sight was not uncommon at Niton, and Louis was going to leave so distressing a scene, when he distinctly caught the name of Herbert, and again bending forward he saw a gentleman advance to the chaise and giving a small basket of fruit to the lady, regretting that he could not procure a pine-apple, but hoped those beautiful grapes would compensate for the disappointment.

"That is the way you always treat me," said the lady in no very gracious temper, "I am sure that you might have found a pine, had you only taken the trouble to search for one, and you have been gone long enough to find a dozen, but I suppose it would have cost more than you thought proper to bestow upon a dying wife, although if it were not for *my* money you would now scarcely have bread to eat."

"Indeed, my love," replied the patient husband, "I rather think that two pine-apples would not have cost so much as that little

basket of simpler fruit has done ; but from all the gardens in which I have been, I could not have gathered one sufficiently ripe for you : however, that you may not be so disappointed to-morrow, I have sent to beg the favor of one from Appuldercomb."

Pacified in some degree by this hope for the morrow, the lady again took the rejected basket from her servant ; and tasting the grapes, she declared that they were very bad, and as to the peaches, they were not fit to eat.

Louis now left his hiding place, anxious to satisfy himself that he was not mistaken in the persons before him—and yet, could that altered man be Dr. Herbert ? Having, however, descended his eminence, and reached the sands, he immediately made himself known to the party.

Dr. Herbert took the offered hand of Louis, and pressing it between both his own, looked expressively on his countenance, but remained silent for some minutes ; while Mrs. Herbert, delighted by the novelty of another acquaintance, brightened as she tried to smile in welcome of so unexpected a meeting. Louis expressed his concern on seeing her so great an invalid, but always alarmed by such condolences, she endeavoured to avert the subject,

assuring him that she was considerably better; and now only had a little weakness to conquer, which sea air would, no doubt, remove. Her looks, however, contradicted her words; for consumption had too evidently preyed on her cheek, and left but a small vestige of what Mrs. Herbert once had been. Still she endeavoured to conceal its effects from the observation of others, as much to deceive her own heart from its dreaded issue. Drest in all the extravagance of fashion, her ghastly cheek, rosy with an artificial bloom, the unhappy woman would fain have borrowed the semblance of health by assuming its prerogatives; but none of these could disguise the ravages of that fatal disease: and, while she vainly endeavoured to suppress the momentary cough which interrupted her efforts to be gay, Louis sighed as he looked with deep compassion on that sickly form, which so soon must exchange its costly trappings for the shroud of death!

Common-place observations followed between Dr. Herbert and Louis: for although the thoughts of both were probably only full of associations mutually interesting, yet neither dared to touch upon subjects which must have led to those of painful import. The invalid then expressing a wish to return home, Louis

was about to take his leave; but as Dr. Herbert pressed him most earnestly to join them for the remainder of the day, he promised to do so, as soon as he had apprised Mr. St. Williams of his intention.

Dr. Herbert was indeed an altered man since Louis had last seen him; for although still in the zenith of manhood, sorrow had prematurely laid the marks of age upon his brow. His fine manly countenance was no longer animated with the vigor of a light heart, and the experience of cruel ingratitude had chilled him almost to misanthropy. But the voice of one, whom the world had not yet taught to shun the unfortunate, suddenly rekindled the latent spark of generous feeling, and as he looked on the noble countenance of Louis, he felt as if the sympathy it gave might yet awaken in his own heart something of its former energy.

Naturally of an open generous disposition, had he been taught in early life the necessity of self-control, and the discipline of a better education, Dr. Herbert might have lived as much honored and beloved, as he was now pitied and deserted. This desertion from those who, when he was a "good companion" courted his society and fed upon his hospi-

tality, he felt as a severe trial ; but it was the more embittered by the consciousness that had he better served his God, in the sacred office with which he had been so injudiciously invested, he would not have been deserted by his peace of mind : he would have found a rock on which to rest securely amid the storms of earthly cares ; and tribulations would then have fallen only as the visitings of Heaven ! But he had perverted the talents, and turned to bitterness the blessings, which had been bestowed, and was therefore left to feel the anguish of an accusing heart. His children, of whom he had made idols, lived but as thorns to pierce the bosom which had so proudly, so fondly fostered them ! yet he dared not complain, for he had brought them up in the neglect of their God : how then could he expect them to revere an earthly parent ? He had made religion only a secondary object in their education, and could he now hope that their conduct would be governed by its laws ?

When left alone with Louis, Dr. Herbert unreservedly confided to him all his domestic afflictions. He told him that ever since the unfortunate elopement of Caroline, Mrs. Herbert had declined under the pressure of so

heavy a blow; and, unable to bear up against the shame and disappointment which it had brought on them all, her temper had yielded to the irritability of caprice and restlessness. That notwithstanding all their united efforts to recall their daughter, by every assurance of forgiveness, she had rejected their appeal, and declared that she would never return to a home where she could be regarded only as a criminal. From that period they had never heard from her, nor had they been able to trace her destination. Her unhappy father, therefore, believing that in London he might have a better chance of discovering her abode, and thinking that the health of Mrs. Herbert required better advice than he could procure in the country, determined to let Durnford Rectory, leave his parochial duties in the hands of another, and for a twelvemonth reside in the metropolis. This he had done, but all his efforts to reclaim his child had hitherto been unavailing, nor had he ever been able to gather any tidings of her welfare, excepting that a Mrs. Melford had been known in Rouen—said to be wretched in her marriage, Mr. Melford being, not only a most profligate gambler, but also tyrannical in his conduct as a husband. By the description of her person, no doubt

remained that this was poor Caroline ; Dr. Herbert, therefore, immediately on hearing this, had set off to Rouen ; but Melford was no longer there, and it was supposed that, under a feigned name, he had fled from that place to try elsewhere the success of his villanous enterprises. Thus disheartened by these fruitless researches, the afflicted father returned to England, without any remaining hope of finding his stray lamb. But another cause of anguish met him on his return home, for Frederic was expelled from college, in consequence of having excited a rebellion ; and being so disgraced, he resolved to enter the army in India, declaring, that if his father refused to purchase him a commission, he would offer himself a common soldier. To the army, however, Dr. Herbert could raise no objection, as it seemed the only alternative under all circumstances ; but the enormous debts already incurred by his son's extravagance at college, together with the sum required to establish him in a military profession, reduced him to the necessity of giving up his establishment at Durnford, and to retire on the produce of his living, which, with his wife's settlement, would still enable them to live in every comfort, though not in their former style.

Having thus despatched his son to India,
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he returned to Lymington, to dispose of the remainder of his property at Durnford, and to take possession of the humbler parsonage, belonging to the living ; but Mrs. Herbert being too ill to bear the bustle of these arrangements, he had taken a lodging at Shanklin, until every thing were prepared for her reception at their new abode.

Louis listened, deeply interested in this detail of accumulated sorrow, nor could he but admire the resignation with which his unhappy friend endured his present trials, and the patient forbearance with which he submitted to the caprices of a truly provoking wife. Far from complaining of her, he spoke of her situation with equal commiseration and tenderness, palliating as much as possible the fretfulness of her temper, under the allowances of a lingering illness, and the anxiety which she had suffered in the conduct of her children. Humbled indeed in himself, under the stroke of domestic calamity, his once proud mind was now subdued to receive the reflections of an awakened conscience ; and convinced of the errors of his past life, he resolved to begin a new career, and to seek in the duties incumbent on a minister, the happiness which, in their neglect, he had so justly forfeited.

Louis now took leave of his friends, promising that he would be a frequent visitor to them during their stay at Shanklin. Dr. Herbert then expressed a desire of an introduction to Mr. St. Williams, upon which Louis ventured to assure him that he would be most welcomely received by all at Niton Grove. With this he departed, assured that in the chastisements of heaven, Dr. Herbert would yet be blest; and impressed with those strange vicissitudes, which in a few years had so changed the views of a once happy circle, he returned home to meditate on the fallacy of human speculations.



CHAP. VI.

FIVE years had now elapsed since Ellen had become a resident at Llanvair, and that time had changed her to a consistent Christian. It was, however, long before the ungoverned spirit of her proud heart was subdued to the influences of religion; and, though with Lady Warton, she could scarcely feel her orphan situation, so delicately was it alleviated by every affectionate attention, yet pride would often overcome her better self, and pain her generous friends, by leaving them to suppose that she was unhappy in her dependence, or dissatisfied with their endeavours to make her forget it. Such relapses were, however, never lasting; and when she saw that she had really wounded the feelings of others by her impetuosity, she would instantly struggle severely with herself to conquer her temper, and do all in her power to retrieve the smiles of Lady Warton, which on such occasions were gene-

rally withheld as the only mark evinced of disapprobation. Her language was, however, no longer "I *will* do what is right," but, "oh! I wish that *myself* were so subdued, that the Spirit of God might dwell within my heart, and actuate my every thought, word, and deed." On her first arrival at Llanvair, she had renewed all her former avocations with her former zeal; but no sooner had the novelty again passed away, than those daily duties became irksome to her, and she would sometimes think their repetition tedious, or their fulfilment fatiguing. The retirement of Llanvair too became joyless to her, and then she would think of poor Caroline, and of those giddy days which they had shared together; and as these recollections returned to her mind, she was almost tempted to wish that Llanvair were less monotonous—less dull. Yet she continued to pursue the path which she knew to be that of duty, without complaining of the *ennui* which silently she endured, convinced that the fault was wholly in herself; but whenever she felt herself tempted to relax, she would pray the more earnestly to be preserved from the instability of her own heart, and to be enabled more steadily to pursue a course of Christianity.

Thus, with a constant watchfulness over herself, and a steadfast reliance on the assistance of the Almighty, her temper gradually softened; she became docile towards others, and uniformly mild within herself. It is true her spirits had lost their early buoyancy, she no longer trod the elastic step of happy thoughtlessness, and every exertion seemed a fatigue to her. Her cheek, too, had lost its rosy playfulness; pale with the sickly hue of sorrow, she excited interest—not now of admiration—but of pity. Her once brilliant talents were dimmed by a melancholy, which in all she did betrayed itself the characteristic of her feelings. Yet she never complained of being unhappy, but was often heard to say, that she would not exchange her present quiet life, for all the pleasures she had once enjoyed in a gayer world.

But she was now called upon to evince the fruits of that religion which she professed. The cup of sorrow was again given to try the strength of her faith, that, tasting it in submissive obedience, humbly relying on the love of Him who gave it, she might be blessed by its bitterness, and feel its efficacy healing the soul which would thus receive it.

Lady Warton, who was justly endeared to

Ellen as a fond mother, now sunk under the decay of years; and after a short illness, departed to that rest which "remaineth for the people of God." As "blessings brighten as they take their flight," so Ellen clung to her benefactress, as never, never had she been so valuable, so essential to her as in her decline; but her sorrow bore not now the violence of uncontrolled grief. Subdued to the will of God, she left to him the issue of the threatening mandate; and assured that her loss would only be gain to her departing friend, she endeavoured to check every selfish complaint.

It was the morning on which Lady Warton's illness first assumed an alarming aspect, that Fanny and Ellen stood anxiously watching the invalid, when calling them to her, she exhorted them to love religion as the first of earthly blessings, and early to seek the favor of their God, that those days might not draw nigh when they should find no pleasure in them. For none but Christ himself, she said, could lead us on from "strength to strength," until he completes our sanctification in realms of never-failing holiness. His power alone could disarm death of its terrors, and remove from us the just penalty of our transgressions! Then turning to Ellen, she added, "Mourn

not, my child, that God is about to take a sinner to salvation; rather praise him with me, that a pilgrimage of many cares is thus closing at the dawn of a glorious morning; for the 'Sun of righteousness' is risen over me with healing in his wings, nor is it in the power of the grave to hide in its darkness the brightness of those heavenly beams! Mourn not for yourself, my Ellen, for you will never be left destitute while you lean with confidence on the protection of your heavenly Father. From Mr. Seymour too you will, I am sure, receive a parent's kindness; and, although I have secured you such a provision as will, I trust, leave you independent, yet, Ellen, refuse not the home which will be offered to you at St. Llenard's—at all events, until Herbert returns to be elsewhere your protector, should you desire it: and, Ellen, as I know that you will value what I now say to you, let me entreat you to conquer that disposition to melancholy, in which, I fear, you sometimes indulge. Your trials have indeed been severe; but the Christian, to whom afflictions have been blest, looks back upon them only as storms which drove him to the rock of peace. I know, my love, that you would fain ask, 'How can I be gay, when all my fondest hopes have been so early

blighted?' I answer, that were you so, it would be inconsistent with a feeling heart, nor would I wish to see your former high spirits prevail, after the experience of such sad lessons. But is there no medium between these two extremes? Remember, Ellen, that if you would honor the religion you profess, you should endeavour most tenderly to guard it from the opprobrium of *melancholy*, which is too often attached to it by those who wish to find an excuse for its neglect."

"Surely," said Ellen, "no one who has known me, can wonder that sometimes I should appear depressed; nor could they charge to religion a sadness which religion only has power to mitigate—since were it not for its consolations, not all the blessings of earth could alleviate the anguish with which the past has been so painfully fraught."

"But people of the world, my dear Ellen," replied Lady Warton, "will not argue on the evidence of truth, where religion is the subject of animadversion. Affliction indeed often leads to piety, and piety again brings peace. The world, however, reversing this, makes no allowances for the trials which equally assail the Christian as the infidel: but if beneath the weight of private sorrow, a Chris-

tian is seen to droop, it is not told that *religion only could* enable the patient sufferer so silently to endure; but it is said, that *religion* has sapped the buoyant spirits of youth, and checked its characteristic sprightliness. Let it then be your aim so to evince the comforts of religion, that none may doubt the origin of true peace. This is not, I know, an easy virtue to attain, since human nature loves to indulge in reveries of past experience. Time, and a constant vigilance over your own thoughts, can therefore, perhaps, alone produce the habitual cheerfulness of genuine piety; but whenever you feel tempted to cherish that melancholy, which will ever betray itself on the countenance, think within yourself, ‘Am I not exposing religion to the censure of my own weakness, and thus injuring the cause which I would so tenderly uphold? Since the world *will not* see how much of earth is mingled with my sorrow—how much of sin prevails in my regrets!’

“Is grief then so sinful,” asked Ellen, “that we must not mourn our bereavements? Is not the heart made better by its sadness?”

“Sorrow, that is chastened with submission,” replied Lady Warton, “so far from being sinful, is indeed beneficial; and when

affliction meets us, hardened must that heart be, which is not touched by its visitation: but if instead of receiving it as a cup of mercy, given perhaps to destroy the idolatry which too often mingles in our earthly affections, we drink its drop of bitterness, rejecting the blessings which are so profusely intermixed—then, do we not pervert the dispensations of unerring goodness?”

“ Oh! do not for one moment suppose,” exclaimed Ellen, “ that I am insensible to the mercy which has dealt so bountifully with me; or, that I do not value and even *enjoy* the many, many blessings, which are so undeservedly my portion. Indeed I am not unhappy, though I confess that life seems changed, and that every thing I see appears to be tinctured with the past—but perhaps this change is only in myself, and thus unconsciously I may look depressed when I fancy myself otherwise.”

“ I truly believe that to be the case,” replied Lady Warton, “ and therefore am the more anxious to guard you against giving even the appearance of what does not perhaps exist. Yet think me not callous to the afflictions which have tried you, or that I cannot enter into the feelings which they have left; but you have already conquered so much that was before

adverse to principle, and so sincerely evinced, by such self-control, your desire of entering the pale of religion, that, no longer the slave of ungoverned feelings, you have only to struggle a little more with your own heart, to become, with the blessing of the Almighty, an exemplary christian. And then, my Ellen," added Lady Warton, with an encouraging smile, "retrospection will only appear as a cloud which can return no more to dim the hopes of heavenly promise! and sorrow rise but as an evening vapor, which must vanish as the dawn of grace shall shed in your heart the powerful rays of its enlivening influence. But I believe the love of talking has carried me beyond my strength, for I feel myself exhausted, I should now like to rest."

Ellen silently pressed the hand of her benefactress, in token of grateful acknowledgment, which her heart was too full to express; then leaving Fanny to watch beside the invalid, she retired to her own room, and there meditating on what she had just heard, she felt how near the hour was at hand, in which her fortitude would be tried; and seeking the support of Heaven, she prayed to be preserved from every besetting sin, that she might more patiently

endure to the end, in the strength of Him who overcame the world.

Truly might it be said that death had no dominion over the grave of Lady Warton. Its awful trump sounded to her expecting soul, only as the messenger of glad tidings; and as the resistless sword severed the corruptible from its incorruption, with a gentle sigh, the expiring saint entered into the joy of her Lord! She died to sin and sorrow, and only slept to rise triumphant in the strength of Jehovah!

Many were the tears shed over the tomb in which was consigned this "poor man's friend," and many an aged hand was there upraised in earnest petition to "die the death of the righteous," and to know an end like hers!

Having performed the painful task of resigning the ashes of his beloved parent to its parent earth, Mr. Seymour turned to console and uphold those who, as consigned to his care, looked up to him for an example of resignation; and as affliction generally brings with it many active duties, to temper with employment its deadening force, so Mr. Seymour found in the charge of Lady Warton's affairs, enough to engage his mind from melancholy associations.

To Fanny and Ellen he gave a portion of his cares, reminding them that in cheerfully fulfilling the wishes of the deceased, they could best prove their fond respect to her memory. The charge of the young Stacys therefore devolved to Ellen, and to Fanny the household concerns of Llanvair Hall; while Mr. Seymour was engaged in settling the property according to the will of Lady Warton. The house and gardens were left to Fanny, and all the adjoining land to Herbert Irwyn; each to receive an adequate sum of money in proportion to the value of their allotted property. Four thousand pounds to Ellen, to all the servants an annuity, and the remainder to be divided between Mrs. Stacy and her daughters.

As soon as all this was duly arranged, Fanny, with Ellen and her cousins, returned to St. Llenard's; but tears trickled down their cheeks as they turned from the now deserted Hall. Mr. Seymour, however, endeavoured to divert their minds from a scene which he knew must excite painful feelings in them all; and turning to Ellen, with a cheerful smile he said, "Herbert will soon come home, and then I hope Llanvair Hall will be again peopled with happy hearts, and may many a bright sun yet rest

upon its walls!" Fanny blushed, and Ellen at last smiled through her tears, as she caught the meaning of this apostrophe.

The education of the young Stacys being nearly completed, their parents had requested that in the event of Lady Warton's decease, which had long been anticipated, they might immediately be sent to India. Not many days after their removal to St. Llenard's, Mr. Seymour heard of a friend going to Calcutta, to whose protection he knew that he might safely entrust them; he therefore gladly accepted so good an opportunity, and leaving Wales with his young people, in a few days reached London, from whence they were shortly to embark.

He left Fanny and Ellen with a promise, that if possible he would persuade Miss Aubrey to return with him for the summer, should he find her within his reach. Thus many a fair prospect seemed again to open before them, in the hope of so soon seeing those, whose long absence had only strengthened the ties of mutual affection.

Mr. Seymour found Miss Aubrey already in London, but as she was always busy in the midst of duties, he could not prevail on her to leave such claims for the gratification of any

selfish pursuit. She longed indeed once more to visit Llanvair, where she had enjoyed so many happy hours: for although she who gave them their charm was no more! yet many still remained to share her fondest thoughts. The temptation was therefore great; but as she had claims in Scotland, which seemed more essentially to demand her presence, duty triumphed and decided her its follower. Her sister, whose marriage had so ill accorded with the principles of Miss Aubrey, had lately lost her husband, and as affliction often reunites the broken tie of family love, Miss Aubrey ventured to hope that as the cause of their alienation was removed, her sister would again accept the affection which had thus outlived every unkindness and repulse. She had therefore written, offering to reside with her, if her doing so could in the least contribute to her comfort. To this she had received so cold an assent, that at first Miss Aubrey was tempted to relinquish her purpose; but when she reflected on the dreadful principles which her unhappy sister had imbibed, under the false tutorship of a husband whom she had too blindly loved, and that three little children were left by an infidel father to cherish in their

ignorance the curse of infidelity, she felt peculiarly called upon to go and be the bearer of those glad tidings, which might rouse them from the fatal sleep of unbelief, and recall them to salvation ! The opportunity of doing so was at least not withheld from her, although it was offered with so little encouragement ; but however painful was the mission, she felt that it was a sacred duty to which every private feeling must be sacrificed.

Mr. Seymour confessed that her arguments were much too powerful to be refuted by one objection, and therefore now only endeavoured to strengthen, rather than oppose, so laudable a design. He bade her go, clothed in the armor of divine strength, that whatever repulses she would at first doubtless meet with in the perverse opposition of her sister's principles, she might stand firm in her own cause, endeavouring to prove their fallacy by the mild persuasions of truth, and by gently feeding the minds of her younger charge, she might at length prepare the tainted soil to receive the seeds of the heavenly fruit.

Miss Aubrey saw indeed that duty, as Mr. Seymour had represented it, lay as a strait path before her ; and though she could not help comparing the cordial invitations of Fanny

and her affectionate Ellen, with the heartless acceptance of offered kindness from the sister of her earliest care, yet she resolved no longer even to listen to the allurements of temptation, and therefore at once decided in favor of Scotland. She promised Mr. Seymour, however, that as soon as she could release herself from more binding claims, she would hasten to Llanvair and pass a long summer with her young friends.

Having seen his nieces comfortably settled on board, Mr. Seymour gladly turned his thoughts homeward, and was one morning going to the bank to settle some business of Lady Warton, previously to his quitting London, when he saw a young man apparently returning from thence, whose face was, he thought, familiar to him; and looking more steadily at the stranger as he approached him, immediately recognized Herbert Irwyn!

Greetings of mutual welcome, as may be supposed, followed the unexpected meeting; and when the first surprise had in some degree subsided, Herbert accompanied Mr. Seymour to his abode, to hear and to relate all that was immediately interesting to both parties. His own story was soon told. He had arrived in town only two days from Portsmouth, where

he had first landed from his voyage. Having been entrusted with papers of importance, from the Missionary Board at Tanjore, he had in consequence hastened his return to England a few months earlier than he would otherwise have done ; and having for eight years served an honourable campaign of many dangers and arduous toils, he was now come home to enjoy the fruits of his labors, and to enter a more peaceful career in the domestic employments of a country life.

Mr. Seymour then related all that had lately occurred at Llanvair. Herbert was already acquainted with the death of Lady Warton through the newspapers, and he dwelt feelingly on an event which had thus deprived him of a pleasure, to which he had so earnestly looked forward, of finding the happy and beloved circle at Llanvair Hall still unbroken. The loss was, however, so mitigated by the happy issue of a well-spent life, that lamenting the departure of christians, he knew was only regretting their bliss. Of his poor mother too, he spoke with fond regret, which led to the subject of Ellen's situation. He deeply compassionated her, and though he was truly rejoiced to find that affliction had been so blest to her, yet he regretted, with all the sym-

pathy of an affectionate heart, the severe ordeal through which she had been required to pass. He had met with Louis at Portsmouth, and from him he had heard many particulars of friends in whom he still was interested. The subject of Ellen had been but slightly touched upon ; but enough was said to convince Herbert that any attempt to effect a réconciliation would be both injudicious and fallacious, so firmly did Louis adhere to his determination of never seeing her again.

Having thus mutually discussed every subject of interest, Mr. Seymour proposed writing home immediately, to announce the arrival of Herbert ; fearful that his sudden appearance might otherwise affect the weakened spirits of Ellen ; but this Herbert had done on the day of his landing, the girls were therefore already prepared to see him in the course of a few days.

Herbert, now in the flower of manhood, possessed a cultivated mind, and a heart truly governed by the principles of christianity. The natural susceptibility of his disposition, blended with the buoyancy of an energetic spirit, gave a delicacy to his character, which, while it softened, subdued not the manly fortitude of true courage. His career in India

had been marked with many a bold enterprise, while many a slave owed liberty to his generous and compassionate zeal; and infidels had been awakened to christianity by the influence of his pious labors and unanswerable persuasions.

Beloved therefore by all who were placed under his control, and respected by his superiors, he left India with a name immortalized by the praises of the great and good, rather than by military aggrandisement or ill-acquired wealth. Yet ambitious only in the cause of virtue, he had attained all for which he had loved to toil; and now returned to claim the reward of domestic retirement in the land which had always been held in such dear remembrance, satisfied that in the possession of health, competence, and contentment, he had every earthly essential for happiness. Never had he lost his love of simplicity; and often, when obliged to mix in the gay revels of India's dazzling courts, he would sit and muse upon Llanvair, till all its romantic valleys and village scenes would rise in imagination, to throw their magic over him; and then might beauty pass unheeded by, while Fanny Seymour, in all her simple loveliness, would wake the past and bid the present wear no charms for him. But short were these revellings,

amidst the fairy dreams of fancy ; for he would quickly be roused, to win in active duty the passport which he knew could alone obtain the prize for which he ran ; and then would he only long to wear that crown of honor "which to faithful services belong," as he woke to the reality of that deep gulf which lay betwixt his home and him, that gulf which makes "distance palpable, and return precarious."

Llanvair was a scene of jubilee, as Mr. Seymour and Herbert were welcomed in their return. Joy seemed to be the common feeling amongst its people, as young and old with loud acclamations hailed the stranger to his native home ; and "Long live our young master !" was echoed from every cottage dwelling. The earliest fruits and rarest flowers had been gathered by the peasantry of St. Llenard's, in humble tokens of rejoicing, and were now scattered on the lawn of the Priory, as Mr. Seymour, followed by Herbert, passed the grateful throng of village eulogists. Poor old Johnson, supported by her tall cane, stood in the porch that she might be first to meet her "own dear boy ;" but the word "welcome" died upon her lips, and with tears only could she speak the rest. The door of the well-

remembered little study was half open ; there stood Ellen, who, overcome with mingled associations as she heard the joyful shoutings which announced her brother's approach, had fallen on the bosom of the smiling, trembling Fanny ; and thus supported by each other, they might be said to look like twin blossoms, drooping beneath a transient summer's storm.

Herbert sprang forward, and raising Ellen from her resting place, pressed her fondly to his heart ; then taking the hand of Fanny, said, " I trust we meet to part no more."

The good father looked upon the scene ; and even on his manly countenance were betrayed the feelings of a full heart, as he inwardly implored Heaven's best blessing on his children. Smiles, however, soon resumed their gladdening influence ; it was only Ellen who, oppressed with feelings now so new to her, sobbed in excess of joy ; but relieved by the unrestrained indulgence of tears, she went to bed with a lighter heart than she had perhaps known since Herbert had last seen her.

In a few weeks Llanvair was restored to all its wonted cheerfulness, and a bright summer smiled on the union of Herbert and Fanny. They were married amidst the blessings of the people, and Mr. Seymour having thus lived

to see the accomplishment of every earthly wish, now seemed prepared to depart in peace, whenever his days had numbered out their portion.

Llanvair Hall was to be prepared for its new tenants under the directions of Mr. Seymour and Ellen, while Herbert took Fanny to England to see the beauties of that far-famed land. They closed their excursion in the Isle of Wight, where they were joined by Louis, and an intimacy with the St. Williams's again renewed. Herbert did not forget, in the midst of his own prosperity, the misfortunes of his former guardian. He frequently visited the humble rectory of Durnford, and endeavoured by every kind attention to make Dr. Herbert forget how much he was neglected by others. Mrs. Herbert was no more, and poor Caroline had returned a prodigal to her paternal home. She had at length escaped from the cruel tyranny of her husband; and now lawfully separated from him, she sought, beneath the shelter of a parent's love, a rescue from those sorrows for which she had so fatally left it. Broken hearted, however, she was now dead to the voice of kindness, nor would she receive consolation even in the tender sympathy of a father's fond solicitude. She would see no

one beyond those who habitually surrounded her, nor could Dr. Herbert prevail on her even to leave her room. It was enough, however, that the unhappy alien had returned to him; and for the rest he trusted to the mercy of a pitying God, and hoped that religion, together with time and continued kindness, would gradually restore the sufferer to submission, and effectually bind up the broken heart.

Fanny, although delighted with the scenery around her, and grateful for the attentions which continually awaited her, still thought that no place could be compared to her native home, and now longed to renew those domestic duties, which were wanting to fill up her cup of happiness. The return to Llanvair being therefore decided, Herbert took leave of his friends, but the regret in parting from Louis was mutually embittered by the prospect of never meeting again on this side the grave; for the tie, which had once so closely united their interests, was for ever dissolved, and now about to be divided by time, by country, and by circumstances, so that further communication was scarcely likely to be renewed.

After an absence of three months, Herbert and Fanny now returned to their peaceful

home. In the charge of his estate, and in the prosecution of Oriental studies, Herbert found ample employment; while Fanny, in resuming all her village cares, administered to the wants of others from the blessings which were so largely her portion. The faithful Johnson was immediately reinstated to all the dignities of housekeeper to her young master, and although too feeble to resume the active duties of her situation but by proxy, yet she proudly bore its honors, while she loved to talk of "Master Herbert," as if he were still the infant of her watchful cares.

Ellen, too grateful to leave Mr. Seymour, remained at the priory to supply the place of Fanny. On her countenance now sat the smiles of peace, and those who daily saw her, thought that happiness had again resumed its wonted power in her breast; so cheerfully did she engage in all the duties of her situation. But it was only the eye of heaven who could see the inward struggle which those smiles had cost her—could pity the latent sorrow which preyed on that wounded heart! It was when no ear could listen to her sighs—no anxious eye was near to trace the fountain from whence a tear could spring, that these were suffered to escape the bosom in which they lay con-

ceased. For there were moments when in yielding to the weakness of her own heart, she would indulge in reveries of painful thought. The name of Louis indeed had never passed her lips since she had been at Llanvair, but the remembrance of his affection was ever the cherished companion of her thoughts and feelings. Yet this scarcely arose from any fretfulness of disappointment, for it was so tempered with resignation, that she would often wonder why, with so many blessings, and still brighter hopes, she could yet feel unhappiness.

But there were seasons too, when Ellen could almost forget this inward suffering; and clothed with the comforts of religion, find in its never-failing help a peace which passeth understanding. When she would take her Bible, and there love to read of Him—that *Lamb of God*—who took upon himself the sorrows of mankind; that while he washed away its guilt with guiltless blood, he might know the power of human suffering, and how to mitigate for us the portion which each of us on earth must bear! Who, even in the form of man, ascended to his eternal throne of glory; that, bending over us with ceaseless intercessions in our behalf, he might still be worshipped as our Father, our brother, and

our God! and that casting upon him the burden of all our cares, we might take up his easy yoke and find a rest from labor.

Another spring returned, and never had Ellen looked or felt more habitually cheerful than now. Her cheek was restored to color, and her eyes sparkled with returning animation; but soon, her voice grew weak, and her form wasted under the power of disease. Her fond brother was the first who ventured to remark the too visible decline; but Fanny turned from the sickly thought, and smiled as she replied, "surely, Herbert, you are unnecessarily alarmed, for never has Ellen looked so rosy—never appeared more cheerful since she came to Llanvair." But Herbert only sighed, and said, "Yes, Fanny, but these are not always sureties of returning health; and have you never seen an expiring lamp grow brighter as it dies?" Anxiety is soon awakened, and Fanny now became tenderly watchful of every look from Ellen, and saw too truly that health had not given that hectic bloom which she had before so gladly hailed, for while it animated, it decayed the cheek on which it rested.

Still Ellen evaded all the enquiries of her watchful nurses, assuring them, that although she certainly felt weak, she suffered no pain,

nor could she in the least complain of being ill. At length, however, every little exertion fatigued her; if she only walked to the Hall she was obliged to lie down and rest—her appetite failed, and she seemed to be daily sinking to the weakness of infancy. Yet she was always cheerful, and declared that she had never been so happy. One day, as she was sitting with Herbert on the lawn at Llanvair, enjoying the soft breezes of a warm May morning, she asked him if he thought that our souls immediately partook of the resurrection on its separation from earthly matter? Herbert replied, “That it was impossible to ascertain by human speculations the mysteries which God in his wisdom had seen fit to conceal from us; but that it was reasonable to suppose that the soul of the believer would at least rest in the peace of God, though not partake of his glory until the day of his second coming, as the tree which withers in the winter, to rise no more until the return of spring.

“Yes,” said Ellen, looking up thoughtfully, “the decline and resurrection of nature’s creation is truly a type of our own. As the flower withers from its stem, so our strength decays, till chilled by the hand of death we fall—but living still, we shall rise again as the ‘Sun of

righteousness' returns to breathe upon our souls the quickening spirit of everlasting life! and then only that which was corruption is left to perish with its parent earth! Oh, Herbert," she added, with an enthusiastic smile, "and after all, a thousand centuries in the scale of eternity are but as one short day!—how soon—how very soon, shall we, who live in Christ, triumph in his grace over every sinful thought, our endless, holy joy, not checked by one sorrowing regret."

Herbert looked at her countenance, and thought that he had never seen an expression of such dignified serenity, and yet he sighed as he thought how "very soon" she might indeed be called to those realms for which her soul already seemed prepared. He took her hand and replied, "The mind, indeed, is truly blest, which can thus rest its hopes on the sure promises of salvation, in that faith which shall hereafter be accounted for righteousness! But indeed, dearest Ellen, you must not allow your mind to dwell too constantly on themes which may sometimes elevate us beyond our present strength, lest your health should fall a sacrifice to your enthusiasm, and the ennobling reverie sink, in human weakness, to melancholy."

“Melancholy!” exclaimed Ellen, “believe me, Herbert, that can never mingle in the contemplations of divine goodness. Oh! brother, I wish you could have heard Lady Warton, when on a bed of pain and death, tell me how religion would elevate the mind to love and enjoy, even here, the happy privileges of its pure delights—how it would dim the retrospection of a sad life, and gild our perspective with all the brightness of its own effulgence! She, too, taught me to beware of melancholy, which true religion cannot know; but it was that of earthly regrets in which I once indulged—and she told me how much of sin was mingled in such feelings. So it has proved, for now I am happy—truly happy, since God follows me even in my loneliness, and subdues all thoughts of self.”

“You have indeed much to be thankful for,” replied Herbert, “and I, who used to be your mentor, may now look up to you, dear Ellen, for precept, and wish that my heart were as well governed as your own; so much have you advanced before me in all that is good.”

“Oh no, Herbert,” exclaimed Ellen, smiling, “I am not the consistent Christian, which you have ever been; and yet so far as your asser-

tion is true, be His the glory who made me what I am; for after all, brother, we can have little to do with our spiritual advancement."

"True," replied Herbert, "all holiness proceeds from God, yet on the part of the believer there are *conditions* to fulfil, although, Ellen, I know that word offends you, on which rest the grounds of our acceptance; for did we not *embrace* the means of grace, we should surely rest dead in trespasses and sin. True religion is that beautiful union of faith and works, which can never be divided; for we might lie down and idly rest all our lives under the *belief* that Christ is 'mighty to save,' and yet our dead creed avail us nothing, unless we also *labored here to do his will*."

"Yes," said Ellen, with firmness, "your arguments are all true; but still as of ourselves we cannot even *think a good thought*, it is the Spirit of God that can alone awaken us to a sense of our own insufficiency; for as without the sun the natural world would be in darkness, so would our souls, without the aid of spiritual light."

"Conscience is mercifully implanted in every breast," replied Herbert, "that all may discriminate between good and evil; and if we always followed its dictates, I believe that



we should not often be beguiled to sin—but come, we must not talk any more, for I see you are tired. I am sure that we cordially unite in principle, though we may sometimes clash in expression; and I trust the time will come, my Ellen, when we shall meet again to be for ever united in the same Lord, whom we both desire to serve.”

“Such is my prayer, dearest Herbert, my fervent prayer,” exclaimed Ellen, as a tear stood in her bright eyes; “and ah! who can tell how soon it may be answered.”

Both now silently returned to the house, equally occupied with serious thoughts. Ellen went to rest; and Herbert to seek Fanny, to discuss with her the change so evident in his sister, from listlessness to extreme energy, and both now expressed their anxiety as to the result of what before they had scarcely dared avow.

From this time Ellen daily lost strength, although she complained of no pain, neither did she seem in the least aware of her danger. But medical assistance now availed nothing, food no longer nourished, nor did sleep restore. She was, however, removed to Llanvair Hall, in the hope that the change would benefit her, as the society of young people was better

calculated to amuse her mind, and prevent her from dwelling too much either on the past or future: but soon she was wholly confined to her room, and quickly declined under the power of atrophy. But never did a christian evince more lively fruits of the hope and joyful consolations of christianity. God seemed to be in all her thoughts, and often when unable to amuse herself otherwise, or to be amused by others, she would lie and sing some favourite hymn, her feeble voice still sweet in its decay.

One evening Herbert, who had not seen his sister for some hours, softly entered the room; but the watchful Faany beckoned him to silence, as she whispered that Ellen was now in a sweet sleep, which she hoped would considerably restore her; "for," added she, "the poor girl was very restless and oppressed before I gave her a composing draught; since which she has slept so quietly, that I have scarcely heard her move or breathe." Herbert, somewhat alarmed by so sudden a tranquillity, went to the bed-side, and gently opening the curtain, saw the sweet saint sleeping, quietly indeed! Her hands were clasped upon her bosom, in the attitude of prayer; a smile yet *rested* on her lips, her eyes were scarcely

closed, but the heart beat no more to animate them.

Herbert stood for a moment motionless in the agony of surprise, then again closing the curtain, with his usual self-command, he led Fanny away, and taking her to the next room, where Mr. Seymour was anxiously enquiring of Johnson respecting the invalid, he gently prepared them for the sudden stroke.

Poor Johnson, who was the first to understand him, clasped her hands as, sinking on the chair, she exclaimed, "Oh! who would have thought that I should live to walk upon that dear child's grave! but God's will be done."

Fanny was deeply affected, and Mr. Seymour, as he bent over her, said, "Well may we mourn for ourselves, if our tears be chastened with submission, for truly is her death our loss; but in Ellen's name, oh! rather let us all praise God, that He has thus removed a child of sorrow, and given her, through Christ, the victory over death!"

A plain marble tablet now marks the grave of Ellen, bearing the dates of her age and death, with the following inscription:

She was!—and yet what boots it now to tell
What only *has* been? Like a rose she was,
On which the poison of a baneful world

Had breath'd its influence—and ere it bloom'd
Scath'd the young bud—then left it to decay!

She is!—but who can tell how blest is she
Who, rais'd by grace, is chosen of the Lord?
Like a fair lily which had nearly died,
Revived by Him whose influence is life,
She lives for ever—a celestial plant,
Fed from the streams of everlasting love!





CONCLUSION.

SINCE thus, as we have seen in the example of Ellen, Influence is so important in its consequences, so awful in its effects! how does it behove us all to make that which we each possess, subservient to the cause of religion, that others may not hereafter trace their faults in awful condemnation to our own! For in the world there is an influence which ever stands opposed to that of God, and many a hand held out to lead the tender mind to feed upon its poison! If like poor Ellen, then, too confident in our own strength, we think example can have no power to bend us to its will, alas! like her must we fall in very weakness, a victim to our own instability! and then nought but the bitter cup of penitence can heal, no other hand but that of God upraise the sinking heart, and bid us live to Him renewed!

But should any answer, that individually *they* can have no *influence* in the world, that

their conduct cannot affect the welfare of another, their precepts have no power to reform; let me ask such, however humble, or poor, or ignorant *they* may be, if in their own little circle they are not linked to some chain of kindred or of social interest, for so does every human being cling to those who love him, and hang on the will of another! Then, when we have done our best to reach the goal of salvation, that others too may find it, on those who go astray, and not on us, will fall the penalty of their disobedience!

Louis de Rancy heard of the death of Ellen, and long mourned her fate as a tender brother might have done. He has since married Miss St. Williams, of whom he often said that never had he seen one so nearly resembling his standard of female excellence, Fanny Seymour.

Lyna Stanhope having completed the education of her young pupils, now forms one of the family circle of Captain and Mrs. de Rancy, who live happy in their union, contributing to the welfare of those around them.

Herbert and Fanny have known few interruptions to their happiness. The only domestic trial which has yet assailed them, has been *the* death of a lovely boy; which served to

remind them, that even to the christian, life must have its vicissitudes; but while they mourned the little treasure, they still desired submissively to resign it to Him who gave them every blessing, which in mercy only He would again remove.

Miss Aubrey has never left Scotland, where she continues an active agent in promoting the good of others. Under her mild and judicious influence, her sister has at length embraced the truths of christianity, and now lives a zealous advocate of the religion which once she rejected. Grateful for the tender solicitude and affectionate interest with which Miss Aubrey has ever loved and served her, she now looks up to her as one to whom, morally speaking, she is indebted for that peace of mind which she had so nearly forfeited for ever.

Mr. Seymour enjoys, in the evening of his life, that heavenly serenity which follows duties well performed. In "all his ways acknowledging God," the good pastor lives a beacon of the sure promises of the Lord; that the "work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness for ever." And now will I say to my young readers, "Go thou and do likewise," and add, in the words

of Mr. Seymour's address to young people, "First seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things shall be added to you; but enter not into the paths of the wicked, for the way of the transgressors is hard." But if the counsels of the Lord are unheeded, if you will not seek Him in whom you may find eternal life, if, disregarding of His precepts, you hold the sacred volume of truth only as a "*scaled book*," then indeed is my voice too feeble to be heard, *my* simple Influence can avail you nothing.



FINIS.



